

Reconnect Haverhill to Cambridge by Rail



Reopening the railway between Haverhill and Cambridge will create an economic stimulus and improve transport links to expanding employment in Cambridgeshire and the national rail network.

Please sign the petition to support the reopening of the railway from Haverhill to Cambridge at railhaverhill.org.uk/petition

Why reopen the railway?

With a population of 28,000, Haverhill is one of the largest towns in the county and connected to the railway network. Despite the original railway closing in 1967, when the population was only 12,000, the town has grown. Cambridgeshire County Council's Local Transport Plan states that 4,260 new homes are proposed at Haverhill, with this population likely to grow to around 18,200 by 2031. Many residents in this area will use the corridor A1307 to reach Cambridgeshire to access jobs and services, including in Cambridge and at the Science Parks and innovation centres to the south east of the city such as Granta Park and the Babraham Research Campus. Each day they face a 35-45 minute journey at best on the congested, single lane A1307. By bus this stretches to at least an hour. Studies show that a rail link to Cambridge station would be under 30 minutes; a prized alternative,

reconnecting a comparatively isolated community and its economic hinterland, and the national railway network too.

Housing shortage around Cambridge is severe hence more people looking to move to cheaper places like Haverhill. But there is no alternative transport to the congested road, no fast rail link. Around 2015, a new station serving the Science Park is due to open in 2015 and a mere 5 minutes beyond the main station. Plans exist to open a station at Addenbrooke's Hospital. Restoring the rail link from Wisbech is also being actively investigated by government.

In Haverhill and surrounding towns, there is growing support for a new rail link:

- 12,000 people signed a petition in support of the scheme between 2000 and 2002
- A market research survey in 2004 showed 73.4% supported the scheme

15,000 copies of leaflet distributed. Haverhill Reconnect Haverhill campaign is GO!

Yes! The 'Wisbech Approach' is now being applied to the Reconnect Haverhill2Cambridge Rail Campaign.

By financing the printing of 15,000 leaflets the Branch is actively supporting the campaign to rebuild the Haverhill to Shelford route. These were handed to the Cambridge to Sudbury Rail Renewal Association, who are leading the campaign, and employing a professional distribution company to pop a leaflet through the letterbox of every home in the district between Haverhill and Linton and onward to Sawston. Each recipient is being asked to sign the enclosed petition: over 1000 have already done so.

The project has to be sponsored by Cambridgeshire County Council and included in the Council's Local Transport Plan as an 'aspiration'. The petition's presentation to the council will indicate the level of residents' support. There is a potential administration problem however: Haverhill is mainly in Suffolk with a part in Essex while much of the railway route lies in Cambridgeshire. So the three counties will have to work together on this, hopefully, just like East-West Cambridge To Oxford.

The project will be subjected to the usual engineering and business feasibility assessment, as well as the inevitable journey through Network Rail's GRIP (Governance for Rail Investment Projects) process. All will have to be funded. The project could well, however, be a catalyst for the further re-development of Haverhill and ensure Cambridge does not become so traffic-clogged that enterprise moves away in frustration. PW/PS

If you have not done so and you live in Cambridgeshire, Essex or Suffolk, you can sign it at this link: <http://www.railhaverhill.org.uk/petition.php>

Cambridge City Deal

Cambridge has been examining where to invest the first tranche of infrastructure money provided as part of the 'City Deal' which offers up to £200m of funding (£100m from the City Deal itself matched with up to £100m from other sources) covering the first 5 years. Further funding could follow totalling £1bn of public and additional private funding over 15 years.

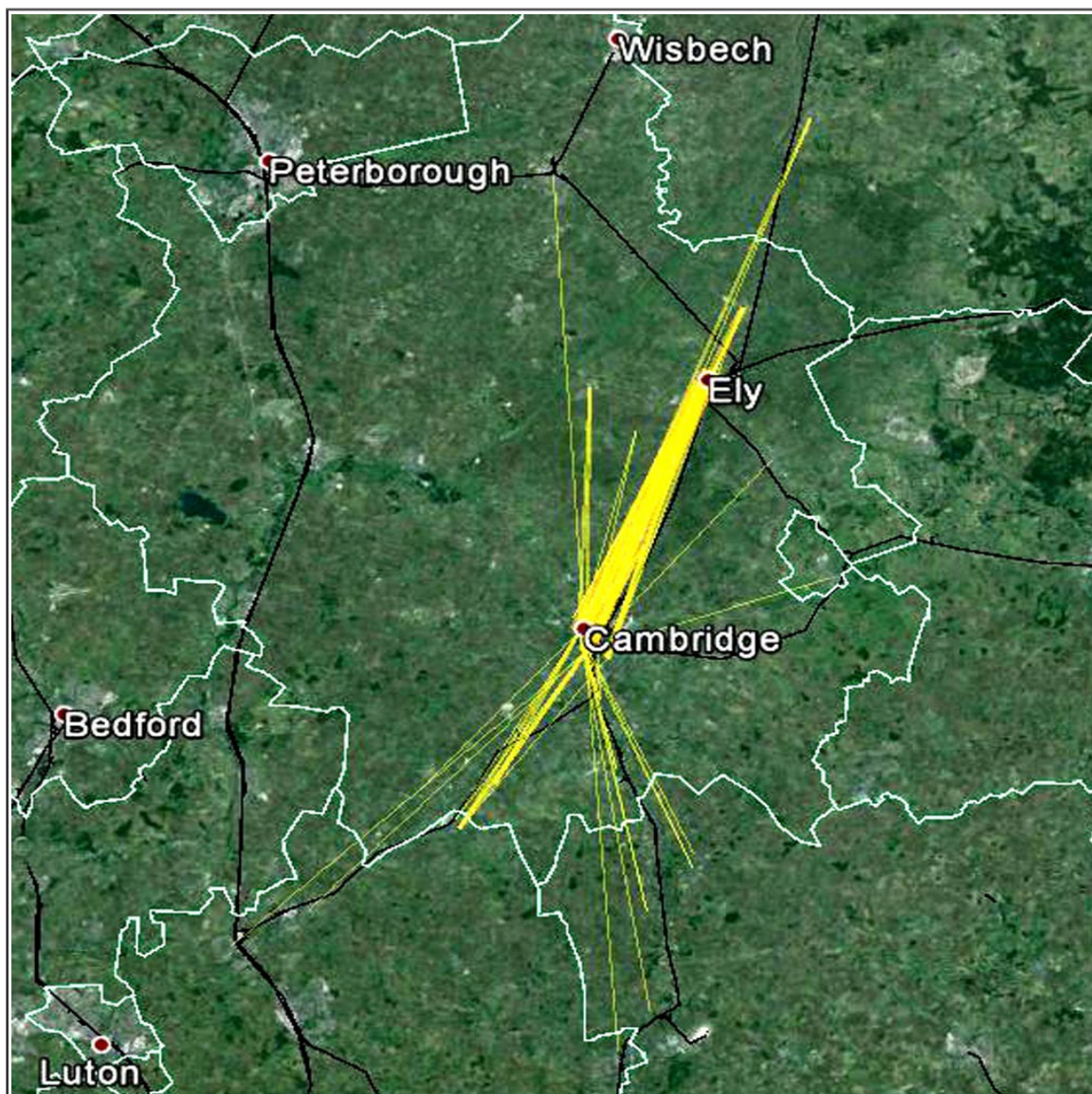
The city suffers from severe congestion and a number of schemes are being assessed; mainly bus priority, park and ride and cycle projects. However the contribution from the region's expanding rail network has been largely ignored. Railfuture East Anglia has been working hard to promote urban rail as part of the public transport mix to help achieve the objectives of linking people to jobs in the Greater Cambridge area.

A couple of documents have been produced and distributed to many, including members of the City Deal board and Assembly, resulting in the suggestions

being discussed at a recent City Deal Assembly meeting:

- "Cambridge Metro: high quality rail based infrastructure for the Cambridge City Deal" describing how improved car, cycle and pedestrian access to stations could bring a significant number of additional passengers into Cambridge, in turn freeing up roads for other users.
- "Cambridge Metro: delivering an urban rail scheme for the Cambridge City Deal" which describes how this network can be delivered.

Railfuture East Anglia has also analysed the Cambridge commuting data from the 2011 Census which lists how and where people travel to work, presenting some important findings in "Commuting to Cambridge: census data backs the case for rail" debate including the supporting data and maps.



The census data shows: there is a strong correlation between the proportion of people choosing to commute to Cambridge by train and the frequency of the rail service

- Newmarket in particular would greatly benefit from additional peak period trains, as would March and Royston
- the frequent service between Downham Market, Littleport, Ely and Cambridge shows what can be achieved, although this success has resulted in overcrowding.
- Haverhill is larger than Ely and a similar distance from Cambridge but has significantly fewer people commuting by public transport. The new railway could be expected to carry worthwhile numbers of people

This is a huge opportunity for Cambridge's urban rail network to be enhanced, rather than viewed as simply just another station on London and regional services. As I write though, it has literally just been announced; see...

<http://www.cambridge-news.co.uk/new-train-stations-750m-City-Deal-projects-fuel/story-26600626-detail/story.html>

that much of what I was about to prescribe is indeed to be pursued: including three new train stations; Addenbrooke's, Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn; plus delivery of East-West Rail and other improvements to the local railway infrastructure. All over the next 20 years. "Public transport infrastructure is rightly very much the priority of the City Deal schemes," said City Deal assembly leader Cllr Tim Bick. PH

The documents can be downloaded from the City Deal campaign page

<http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Cambridge+City+Deal>

**BRANCH MEETING Saturday 27 June at 14.00 hrs in St Mary's at
Stoke Church Hall, IPSWICH IP2 8DA**

**Guest Speaker: is Richard Storer from Crossrail –
NOW CONFIRMED**

NEWS IN GENERAL

Foxton Level Crossing Replacement Deferred

Susan Vandeven reports: "it was only through the grapevine that we learned that Network Rail had pulled its feasibility study for Foxton Level Crossing closure, setting the project back 5-10 years. While funding constraints are no surprise, it is difficult to understand Network Rail's utter lack of communication, particularly with a community that runs an active Rail User Group and Community Rail Partnership."

"Meanwhile, the very problem that kicked off the feasibility study remains –

both sets of pedestrian gates at Foxton Crossing, which cuts across the busy A10, have been out of order for weeks and months. If level crossing closure and a bridge or underpass was felt to be unaffordable, why not seek to tackle issues on a less dramatic scale, for example exploring the possibility of a pedestrian and cycle bridge? All-or-nothing approach could get us nowhere."

Shepreth Station Ramp

The new Disability Discrimination Act-compliant ramp at Shepreth Station has now been completed and provides greatly improved access to the London-bound platform and ticket machine. At the same time, the car park has been



relined, retaining the same number of spaces (11), including a disabled bay. The derelict coal shed has been removed and the car-shaped cycle rack (permitting 10 cycles in one car space) has been re-sited in its place. Many thanks to Network Rail for completing this work.

Station gardening continues to thrive at all three stations, providing a marvellous community activity in each village.

We meet next meeting on 29 June, 7 for 7:30, at Foxton Village Hall. SV

<http://melbourn.org.uk/railusergroup/>

Great Eastern Mainline Inter-City train set Makeover

Many of you will already have sampled the 'refreshed' Mark3 coaches on mainline intercity services from Norwich to Liverpool Street. On Friday May 1st members of the branch were invited to ride on the 11.00 service from Norwich to Liverpool Street comprising the first completed set of refurbished coaches. On closer inspection it was immediately apparent that the train was much more than merely "refreshed": the external livery was the new Abellio GA white with red doors and a deep grey line at the base of the coach giving a



The newly refurbished Greater Anglia Mark 3 Coaches

very elegant look to the entire train.

Inside the 'feel' is that of a new train with the Standard Class seats resplendent in a very attractive moquette plus new tables and carpet. First class is completely different with new seats that both look good and are comfortable, again with new tables, carpets and lighting. Both types of coach are completely repainted within too.

The toilets are now fitted with retention tanks and redesigned for use by the disabled. Stabilised-current plug sockets are fitted to each seat bay so enabling the train to become an office for those who need to work as they travel. Wifi is available *throughout* the train, please note.

Abellio Greater Anglia are to be congratulated, as indeed are Crown Point Depot in Norwich who created this high quality product, and the many new jobs arising from this highly worthwhile £10m expenditure. Abellio GA say they are ploughing an extra £10M back into the business this year from the operating surplus (the Dutch parent company is taking only the "management fee" out of the surplus – the rest is being ploughed back). PW

Greater Anglia update

The Branch was among many rail user groups represented at a stakeholder meeting arranged by Abellio Greater Anglia (AGA). The meeting was held in their offices overlooking the new shopping centre at Stratford and it was interesting to see the extent of the new development going on in the area, the legacy of the Olympic Games and the large numbers of people using Stratford Station.

AGA provided an update on train performance which overall is around 90% and recovering from the problems encountered last year. Problems still exist though on the Great Eastern Main Line with its figures below those of other routes.

The agreed £20m investment of the short franchise (July 14 – Oct 16) was progressing with refurbishment of rolling stock especially on the main London to Norwich service and some electric units. Improvements were also being made at some stations. And as we write, more money has been committed to greatly improving internal cleanliness of trains, especially at the London end. All this in response to Twitter users showering AGA and the media with pictures of the mess left behind, it must be said, buy fellow travellers!

Future investment will depend on what is required by the new Long Franchise specification. Companies had submitted pre-qualification documents and the Invitation To Tender was expected to be issued in July/August 2015, with the new franchise due to kick off in October 2016.

It appears that the Department of Transport received many responses to the specification consultation, and one hopes most of those expectations will be

included in the Invitation To Tender documents. The key issue for many users is the need for new and additional rolling stock on both main line and rural routes to shorten journey times and/or relieve overcrowding.

The franchise might be affected by the outcome of Network Rail's Electrification Strategy. For example, electrification of the Felixstowe to Peterborough line and onwards to Birmingham would release a number of local diesel trains that could be used to lengthen trains on other East Anglia routes or enable some lines to have additional services.

As ever, it is a case of watch this space and be assured that Railfuture will be making its views known. ND

East Anglia Freight Developments

Over many years moving freight was the major purpose of the railway network in East Anglia, indeed, originally some routes were built only for freight. In recent years society has become far more mobile persuading the railway/government to become much more passenger focussed. Freight is still important though, and if the capacity existed there would be much more of it. Hence the following good news.

A line which does offer spare capacity is that from Ely to Norwich. So it's good to report that some of this 'space' might well be filled by a imminent new freight flow. It concerns a large site, formerly a power station, between Norwich Crown Point depot and the River Wensum. This is being re-developed as a 'Generation Park' to include housing and a new power and district heating generator. The energy will be produced by burning straw pellets manufactured, if plans are passed by East Cambs District Council, at Ely by a firm called Pelco. The pellet-making plant will take in straw from a 50 mile radius of Ely and be sited on a leased segment of the former sugar beet factory now owned by Potter Logistics. The pellets will be then taken by 3 trains per week to Norwich. Wagons will be in plentiful supply as the coal burning power stations gradually close down over the next few years.

We intend to support the application to build the pellet-making plant at Ely on broadly the following basis:

1. The finished product will travel by rail.
2. Use of rail enables diversion between scattered end users at relatively little additional cost.
3. The proposed site has a history of concentrating road movements, previously beet.
4. In energy terms, the process is environmentally sound.
5. Failure of this scheme could easily see the raw product travel throughout by road to a plant located at the power station.

Pelco intend to build 4 more similar plants within England's arable crop areas.

Promoting East Anglian railways at Liverpool Street.

Trevor Garrod reports: "On May 20th I helped with a promotional stand at Liverpool Street Station encouraging people to travel by train into East Anglia, and sometimes take a connecting bus to their final destination. It was a very worthwhile event, especially as people also had a lot of questions which we were able to answer, or at least tell them where to find the answer.

There were many takers for the 2015 edition of the leaflet "Discover the Blyth Valley", funded mainly by the East Suffolk Lines Community Rail Partnership and Anglian Bus, promoting the hourly bus link (Mon-Sat) between Halesworth and Southwold.

Meanwhile our member Simon Hope has been ensuring that the leaflet is also available in many outlets in Ipswich and Norwich. It can be obtained from me, Trevor Garrod, at 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ.

Hourly Summer Sunday trains to the Coast!

Railfuture and the East Suffolk Travellers' Association have for some years called for a more frequent Sunday service between Norwich and Lowestoft and so we were delighted when an hourly service started on May 17th. It will continue till September 27th. At Lowestoft you can change to the hourly 61 bus service down to Kessingland (for Africa Alive wildlife park) and Southwold.

Waiting for Suffolk County Council.

At the time of writing we are still waiting for SCC to erect a bus shelter (for which they say they have the money) outside the railway station at Lowestoft for passengers waiting for southbound buses.

We also await the re-installation of real-time information on the screen at this stop and others in Lowestoft and Oulton Broad, which have been out of action for nearly two years. While the County Council are about it, how about a real-time bus information screen in the booking hall at Lowestoft station as well - especially as Abellio Greater Anglia have just installed more modern train information screens?" TG

Govia Thameslink Great Northern meets Cambridge University Railway Club (CURC).

In a lively meeting with perhaps an excess of interruptions, GTGN's Larry Heyman proved patient, charming and very informative. Much of what he said was not news to those of us who have read the Stakeholder reports, been to the meetings and read Rail East in the recent past. He left us in no doubt that delivering Thameslink to Peterborough and Cambridge by 2018 was a substantial challenge, both for Govia and even more so, Network Rail, who are

enmeshed in the unenviable task of rebuilding London Bridge station without the convenience of closing it down.

London Bridge related disruptions reached a point in mid-April that triggered the heavy hand of the Office of Rail Regulation who, happily, gave an albeit grudging 'bill of health' to NR especially on the matter of crowd management during disruption. So work continues but with re-focussed management.

Mr Heyman referred in passing to some of these issues, deftly avoiding the detail, possibly because most of those attending were utterly unaware of south-of-the-Thames traveller tribulation. One question, on inter-availability of next generation Oyster-style electronic TGN tickets with Abellio west Anglia barriers, revealed fundamental incompatibility, *thus far*. But whether Greater Anglia's future 'Oyster-style' ticket will resolve this is currently unknown and in any case, probably a DfT franchise issue anyway.

On being asked whether the fairly recent government £50m funding for Wifi in trains, included the Cl.700s, he replied that Govia themselves would love to know as the Department for Transport was, in mid- April, quite unspecific. Note though that this may well now have been clarified. Somebody asked why so many of the King's Cross to Cambridge run on time to within a mile of Cambridge station only to be severely signal checked. Govia certainly have concerns, said Larry, about traffic regulation at Cambridge and were trying to tighten up punctuality. So hopefully, good news there.

Otherwise Mr Heyman gave a very good account of himself and the meeting was well worth attending. CB



General Election

Congratulations to the region's newly elected and re-elected MPs at the General Election. As with past elections, transport in general and railways in particular did not feature highly in the national debates. It was however, more prominent at a local level and featured on election leaflets and letters to the press.

At the local hustings meeting for the Huntingdon constituency, there were questions raised about local infrastructure to support new housing, on the A14 upgrade and the future of services on the East Coast Main line. Responses

mentioned the importance of getting freight off the A14 and onto rail and there was support for East-West railway between Oxford and Cambridge.

A number of Branch members contacted local candidates and here are some of their replies:

If re-elected I will continue to campaign for better facilities at Newmarket Station, including toilet facilities, a ticket machine and a passenger information system which actually works. I totally agree with you that there should be more trains per hour and I have called for this on many occasions. With the increase in tourists expected with the opening of Palace House and the growth in commuters it is vital that the number of train on that route is increased.

Matthew Hancock MP (W Suffolk)

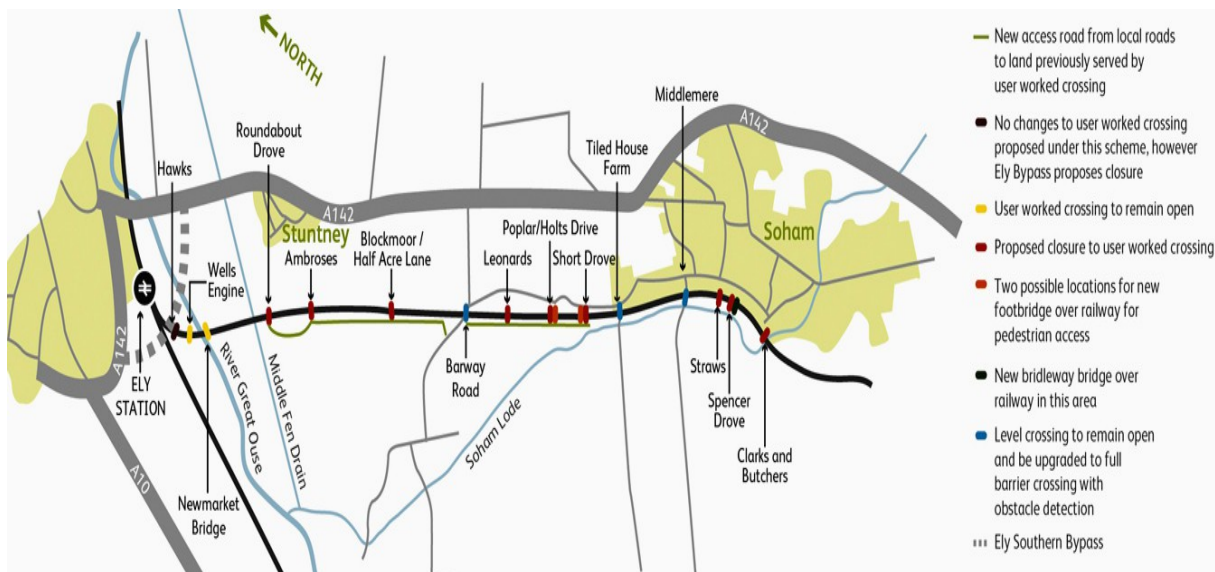
Transport is right at the top of my 'to do' list which I hope to get cracking with if successfully elected next week. *Heidi Allen MP (S Cambs)*

One of the key challenges is level crossings which are gradually being tackled.
Therese Coffey MP (Suffolk Coastal)

Finally a word from defeated Cambridge MP Julian Huppert, who noted that among his proudest achievements whilst in office was getting progress on Cambridge 'Science Park/North' Station and East-West Rail. These are projects that the new MP *Daniel Zeichner* is also keen to progress.

A big thank you to all Branch members who wrote to candidates. ND

Soham-Ely Track Doubling



Several members of the Branch attended the public consultation held by Network Rail in the Soham town library on March 19th. The very helpful NR team explained the engineering implications of doubling the current single

track bottleneck between the site of the former Soham station and where this route from Felixstowe and Ipswich joins the Cambridge mainline at Ely Dock Junction.

Superficially it seems a simple six mile project, but appearances here are very deceptive. They must be as Network Rail's first attempt two years ago, at this modernisation had to be abandoned when it realised the first survey hadn't quite sussed the problems. The map on the previous page shows no less than nine level crossings to be either closed, upgraded or replaced by bridges.

The real problem though is the fen drainage demanding considerable stabilisation to the track bed. Indeed the last few hundred metres of track from Middle Fen Drain to Ely, Newmarket Bridge was going to remain as single



The too fragile for two tracks embankment

track as the embankment could not take double track in its current state. To this end the entire section of railway embankment will have to be completely dug up and rebuilt to modern standards, a very expensive business. So naturally the NR team was pleased to tell us that only two weeks earlier the Department for Transport had urged full track doubling, promising the all-important money to complete this final challenging addition.

The table below shows the initial timetable for the project:

- March 2015 – Public consultation.
- April/May 2015 – Analysis of public consultation feedback.
- Autumn 2015 – Formal submission of the TWAO to the Secretary of State for Transport.
- Autumn 2017 – Proposed start on site, subject to consent.
- Early 2019 – Construction complete.

The Transport & Works Act Order (TWAO) is necessary as there will have to be small amounts of new land-take along the route of the new works. Towards the

end of the project the entire Chippenham Junction to Ely Dock Junction route will close for about six months to enable completion.

This was worrying, so we asked about the freight traffic presently using the route stressing that we hoped planning would start now to make sure all the current traffic remains on rail. Alternative routes we suggested were via Norwich, obviously with a locomotive run-round there, or via London. Some trains might run overnight via Cambridge and Dullingham, provided Cambridge could deal with 30 wagon length formations and the inevitable reversal.

The Project Team were keen to say that although the planned reopening of Soham station was not a part of their remit, they were fully aware of Cambridgeshire County Council's plans to do this and that all work at Soham would be carried out to enable this. Thus we hope the station too will emerge from the six month blockade. It would be useful if the Newmarket west curve (from Warren Hill Junction to Snailwell Junction) could be rebuilt during this period also. Meanwhile, if you have not already read the relevant Network Rail document, go to. <http://www.networkrail.co.uk/elysoham/> PW/PS/CB

The National AGM

Our Chairman, Peter Wakefield, attended the 2015 AGM of Railfuture held in Blackpool on Saturday 16 May, and reports as follows.

It proved to be a smoothly run meeting with the business part of the meeting in the afternoon generating some good and vigorous debates over various Motions. The new Chairman, Chris Brown from Lincoln, handled these with cheerful firmness. We were lucky to have such a good chairman and we will surely look forward to welcoming him to a future Branch meeting.

The good news from the ballot for the three new Board Members is that our East Anglian member, Trevor Garrod, was elected, so well done Trevor. Chris Fribbins from Kent, who was standing for re-election did not achieve the necessary number of votes, very sad as he has done some very good work on our behalf. The result reflects a voting system where individuals often are not really well known nationally, thus winning can seem a bit pot-luck sometimes.

The morning session of the meeting was taken up with a presentation from a member of the HS2 team. A fascinating talk too, outlining progress to date, which was far greater than I'd realised. Then a brief piece from me outlining how our Wisbech campaign has grown so quickly and now going through the GRIP3 process. The Uckfield-Lewes campaign was updated by Roger Blake, while Chris Fribbins progress on the train delay recovery assessment work, organised by the Passenger Group. Do send details of your delayed railway journey experiences to the Group – the greater the response the more accurate and influential the result.

The Mayor of Blackpool addressed us in the afternoon, eloquently speaking of the importance of what we do, urging us onward to do still more. "Blackpool needs us!", she said. Like many towns, it recognises the importance of rail to its economic development. My visit to the AGM proved excuse enough to assess some of the developments across the county for which we have fought over many years, even though it often seems nothing happens.

But then we notice the new trams rolling successfully up and down the Fylde Coast (The Blackpool tramway will soon extend to North station); electrification rolling out across the north (and elsewhere in fact). Then there are all the rail developments in and around Manchester helping it to evolve into a really beautiful, elegant city. Victoria Station too is being rescued from its dingy drab past in a big way, and integrating train and tram on the same level.

I travelled from the city centre along the newly opened tramline to the Airport: very impressive and showing just what light rail can do for urban life. However, at an end to end journey of 45 minutes it did show light rail's limitations, as the journey back to Piccadilly by ordinary train took less than 15 minutes, though not serving so many communities en route.

One lesson Manchester must learn from London, however, is that of integrating the tram and train information. For example, the trams terminating under the Piccadilly mainline station make little or no reference to the National Rail services above, merely noting other tram services, via fixed signs and on-board announcements.

Before making my way home on Sunday, I rode on one of the first trains in many years to run from Manchester Victoria to Burnley direct, using the much campaigned for Todmorden Curve (only 500m long but a seeming eternity to achieve!). But well worth the wait and already transforming the 'near-forgotten' weavers conurbation by offering a faster link to Burnley from Victoria and at a stroke, doubling the number of trains between Burnley's sparkling new Manchester Rd station onward to Accrington and Blackburn.

Perhaps even three an hour, if taking into account the almost hourly service from Colne to Blackburn via Burnley's other stations. Common sense tells us the latter route would be truly useful if it connected just a few miles further eastward to Skipton in the Aire Valley, thus creating even better connectivity in this amazingly impressive area of our country; hitherto very difficult to access by high quality public transport after the cutbacks of 50 years ago or more.

How has this been achieved? Yes, by active, persistent campaigning. Never give up! And on the topic: let us each recruit one new member, making our voice even more effective. PW

DON'T FORGET: 27 JUNE BRANCH MEETING IN IPSWICH AT 14.00 HOURS,,ST MARY AT STOKE CHURCH HALL, IP2 8BX

Our speaker: NOW CONFIRMED, is RICHARD STORER OF CROSSRAIL WHO has been asked to tell us how the project will affect those of us who live further out from their terminus at Shenfield. The meeting will in any case be particularly interesting as there is much to tell you about on developments since our AGM. So do be there, please, if at all possible

Tomorrow's Train Design *Today*: a local prize winner.

Two years ago the Royal Institute of British Architects along with Department for Transport, Network Rail and Rail Standards and Safety Board, instigated a competition called Tomorrow's Train Design Today. All applicants were asked to follow a Brief and submit their proposal for evaluation. From these a selection of ten were awarded £75,000 each to pursue their concept, and in turn from these, just three propositions would be selected for further funding of up to £750,000 each.

Cambridgeshire company, 42Technology, from St Ives, made it into the final three with their concept of a flexible purpose carriage that can be quickly reconfigured from carrying passengers to carrying freight. And back again. As



can be seen in the illustration.

In addition to making the award, the judging panel also specifically praised 42T for the quality of its development work and strength of its presentation, setting out the commercial and technical feasibility of their approach. The judges included directors and senior managers from leading UK transport operator FirstGroup; train leasing specialist Angel Trains; train manufacturer Hitachi; and the Design Council.

42T Consultancy Team Leader, Jon Spratley, said, "The next stage is for us to move ahead with detailed designs and to build a full scale demonstration model showing the adaptable carriage in action." For those of us who knew nothing of this competition, let alone 42T, learning that some of the world's best scientists and technologists are indeed applying their high level creativity to considering 'Tomorrow's Train Design Today' is exciting news.

This is especially so in view of the demise many years back of the brilliant Railway Research Centre at Derby. UK railway research today is no longer closeted in one building or indeed, one country; but in many, on a global scale. Still, it is absolutely no surprise to learn that some of the smartest thinking in this sphere is hot-housed close to Cambridge, so very much a part of our region.

My thanks to Nick for bringing all this to my notice and putting me in touch with Simon McKay, Press Officer for 42Technology, who most helpfully expanded the information and provided some illustrations. For more information, see latest *Railwatch* or take a look for yourself at: <http://www.42technology.com/> and www.futurerailway.org CB/ND

Our User Groups (RUGs) the first in a new series: ESTA; Trevor Garrod unravels its history and points up the current concerns

ESTA (East Suffolk Travellers Association) is one of the oldest rail users' associations in East Anglia and will be celebrating its 50th birthday on November 13th this year. As Rail East will remind us nearer the date.

The association was formed by a group of people who had campaigned against the proposed closure of the East Suffolk Line and, after achieving their initial goal in 1966 worked to promote the line and campaign for improvements. They also campaigned for bus/train integration and, in due course, on all local bus and train issues.

ESTA has always been a cross-party organisation, and that has been one of its strengths. It has also succeeded in keeping on good terms with the operators while reserving the right to criticise them. For example, three years ago it referred Suffolk County Council to the Local Government Ombudsman over its decision to ban buses from Southwold High Street.

Members of ESTA have always stressed the need for robust evidence (which, in

the Southwold case, which was arguably lacking) to support policies. Thus in the mid 1980s we did on-train surveys which resulted in additional trains on Sundays and late evenings.

ESTA ran charter trains in the late 1970s and in the 1980s and some of the profits from these enabled it to pay for notice-boards at stations. It has also sometimes gained sponsor money for publicity leaflets and raised cash for four commemorative seats-on Woodbridge, Saxmundham, Halesworth and Beccles stations respectively, as a tribute to the efforts of four of its key members (all now deceased) from the early days. We also gathered evidence in 2009 to show that moving Lowestoft station 400 metres inland would mean fewer people travelling by train. Our resulting report helped quash that proposal-at least for the foreseeable future.

Nearly every year our members complete a questionnaire about train and bus journeys which they make in a given month. The results enable us to present evidence-based requests to the operators and decision-makers and were also very helpful when we formulated our comments on what should be in the new Greater Anglia rail franchise.

The relationship between ESTA and Railfuture has generally been a productive one-with the Fighting Fund giving us money to help with the Lowestoft station survey; and Railfuture members helping with a Halesworth footfall survey in each of 2012, 2013 and 2014 to gauge the effects of the hourly service, itself resulting from the construction of a passing loop at Beccles for which both organisations had long campaigned. Trevor Garrod

LATE NEWS

Preferred bidders for the East Anglian Rail franchise.

The DfT recently announced that it has chosen the following companies as preferred bidders for the remapped East Anglia Railway Franchise. These are: Abellio/Stagecoach Joint (60%-40%)

First Group

National Express

We will contact their representatives to feed-in our aspirations for a better railway. PW

Branch Meeting on 27 June: the Preferred Bidders will be one of several current topics up for discussion, so your contribution will be much appreciated. And we encountered our almost perfect press banner-headline from a recent Cambridgeshire Times, regarding reconnecting Wisbech to the railway system! http://www.cambstimes.co.uk/news/forget_dualing_the_a47_through_the_fen_s_conference_told_but_re_opening_of_the_wisbech_rail_link_a_completely_diferent_possibility_1_4110759?utm_medium=twitter&utm_source=twitterfeed See you in Ipswich on Saturday 27 June starting at 14.00 hrs.

And there we must leave you. A big 'thank you' to every contributor; the material was much appreciated even if yours did not make it into print, *this* time. The deadline for Rail East 167, is Monday 24 August. Pictures ideally in JPEG format, please. Comments and constructive criticism always welcome via Editor's email/postal address.

Railfuture

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Railfuture

Saturday 27 June

BRANCH MEETING: IPSWICH

Starting at 14.00 hrs

St Mary at Stoke Church Hall,
St Mary at Stoke Church,
Stoke Street
IP2 8BX

**Guest Speaker is Richard
Storer from Crossrail
NOW CONFIRMED**

*Saturday 19 September
Branch Meeting: Norwich
Note 'new 'venue':
Methodist Chapel Meeting
Room, Chapelfield Road
NR2 1SD
at 14.00 hrs*

Guest Speaker: TBA

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