

# raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

Issue 180 • Nov 2018

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**From regular bridge bashes...**



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## Inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

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# JAM TOMORROW, OR MAYBE THE DAY AFTER

BY NICK DIBBEN, CHAIR, EAST ANGLIA BRANCH



I think we can all agree that 2018 has been a very mixed year for the railway. It started with much anticipation; we could expect through trains from Peterborough and Cambridge to Gatwick Airport and beyond as Thameslink reached a major stage, Crossrail would open, new inter-city trains and completed electrification schemes in the north of England and the Scottish central belt. Things didn't quite work out like that. The new Thameslink timetable introduction was chaotic to say the least, but has now settled down. Crossrail has been delayed, probably until the middle of 2019 owing to signalling problems and incomplete stations. Electrical interference is also affecting the new trains on the East Coast Mainline. Network Rail still hasn't finished the electrification work in the North West.

But it is not all bad news. Despite the problems, there are more seats on services into London and more will be added in December 2018. New trains will start appearing on Greater Anglia services in 2019 and people who have visited the factories to see the new coaches under construction are impressed (we have an article in this issue). Progress has been made on the East-West Rail link routeing and there is growing support for the Wisbech line re-opening. The government has announced funding to improve access at stations within Network Rail's Control Period 6, to 2024. Railfuture's East Anglian Branch has responded by supporting plans for lifts being installed at key stations around the region, a significant item we covered in RAIL EAST 179.



The Government has rightly announced a review into the rail franchise system. Some people claim there are easy answers. They are wrong. Railways require a long-term strategy that coordinates with other aspects of society. The links between transport and planning policy are especially important as highlighted in a new report, see item below. If we end up with realistic expectations, a Treasury that isn't greedy and politicians who can make good decisions in a reasonable time, then that would be a good step forward.

## Transport for new homes – missed opportunities

Non-car-related transport in new housing developments amounts to a missed opportunity, according to a new report from an organisation called Transport for New Homes. The group looked at transport provision at a number of major housing developments around the country and was not impressed by what was found. The majority were designed around car-based transport with little thought given to pedestrian and cycle links to existing settlements or public transport. The results were counter to the aims of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that talked about sustainable solutions and encouraging healthy lifestyles. The study noted the difficulties local authorities had in trying to get new railway stations built and the pressure they faced in having to deliver large numbers of new homes in less than ideal locations.

The study found that things were very different in the Netherlands (Amsterdam, right), where development was often based around new railway stations, with new bus and cycle infrastructure put in before the houses were built. Railfuture has always argued in responding to local development plans that new housing should be located close to railway stations or have high frequency bus links to them. This report provides further support for our approach.





## A dementia friendly railway

Train operators need to be more aware of the issues caused by dementia - this was the key message from Liz Withington, our main speaker at the Norwich meeting in September 2018. Liz, who is town councillor and member of the Sheringham Dementia Friendly Community, told the meeting that it was in the train company's own interests to make stations and trains dementia friendly. Around one in 14 people over 65 has dementia, so every train will have passengers that are affected. Ensuring such people have a positive experience when they use the railway will result in further train use. A bad experience will result in people feeling uncomfortable and therefore not wanting to make future journeys.



Although dementia is often associated with short-term memory loss, it does affect other aspects of our capacity, such as sight loss, mobility and perception. People are affected in different ways. Train companies need to make improvements at stations and have dementia-aware staff who can deal sensitively with problems when they occur. Examples at stations include simple obstacle-free routes between the entrance and platforms with clear signage. Simple colour schemes with good colour contrast (unlike Cambridge Station Square, left) are also important as complex patterns can confuse some people. This approach needs to continue

once on the train; a good example is, can passengers easily see station name boards from the train and are the boards lit at night?

This was a very interesting and thought provoking presentation and different from most meetings when the discussion is usually more technical. Railfuture East Anglia has agreed to produce a report during 2019 on what needs to be done to make the railway in the region more accessible - your thoughts and suggestions on this topic will be most welcome.

See slides from the Norwich meeting at [www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Meetings+and+Events](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Meetings+and+Events)

## NEW ROAD MAKES A SAFER AND MORE RELIABLE RAILWAY

BY JERRY ALDERSON AND PETER WAKEFIELD

COVER STORY

It's rare for new roads to feature highly in RAIL EAST, or any Railfuture publication, but it is justifiable on this occasion, especially as Railfuture East Anglia has supported the scheme for three very good reasons: capacity, reliability and safety.



**Railfuture Freight** @RailfutureFret · Oct 30

The notorious Ely station level crossing closes tomorrow when the Ely Southern Bypass comes into operation. The most bashed rail bridge at long last tamed and loses the title? Will allow more freight & passenger trains to run as most road traffic will use the bypass.



**Cambridgeshire CC** @CambsCC

Did you hear? #Ely Southern Bypass is opening tomorrow! **MAR 21** This means we can close the underpass the morning after (Thu. 1 Nov,) from 11am to start working on improving access to pedestrians and cyclists in the...

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Continued on the next page...

Ely Southern Bypass, with its dramatic bridges across the railway at Ely Dock Junction, opened on 31 October 2018 and most road traffic will be diverted on to it. This has put an end to lorries directly passing the entrance to Ely station and queuing at the notorious level crossing, It is now permanently closed and the height-restricted underpass will be singled and controlled by traffic lights to allow better and safer pedestrian and cycling provision with limited road traffic. The closure will take a few months to complete and is currently blocked to all traffic.

Cambridgeshire County Council says it hopes the project - which was originally budgeted at £36 million, with an additional £13 million thrown in following the discovery of engineering problems - will ease congestion in Ely, and improve air quality. Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council Cllr Steve Count said: "Building a new bypass doesn't just improve lives for car and lorry drivers. The new underpass facilities being carried out will benefit both pedestrians and cyclists with a new shared use path. We anticipate that by improving these facilities we are encouraging more people to walk or cycle into the city and it will reduce the number of cars."

We cannot eliminate the stupidity of road users (or any other person) but the number of bridge bashes – which can cause train movements over the railway lines above to be suspended until safety checks are finished – should be much reduced.

For rail passengers and those who transport their goods on the railway, closing the level crossing is a crucial part of the changes needed to enable more trains to pass through Ely. It is a step towards half-hourly trains from Cambridge to both King's Lynn and Norwich plus Greater Anglia's franchise commitment for hourly trains between Peterborough and Ipswich/Colchester. Arguably even more important is the increase in the number of freight trains on the Felixstowe to Nuneaton route.

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## **RAIL SAFETY MATTERS – JOIN US— OUR TOP GUEST SPEAKER**

**SATURDAY 1 DECEMBER 14:00 IN CAMBRIDGE – OPEN TO ALL – FREE**

Level crossings (generally in the countryside rather than full-barrier crossings such as Ely station) pose the greatest risk to safety on the railway but there are others.

That Britain has not had a fatal train accident since 2008 is, er, no accident! It is down to a safety-first culture and professional behaviour across the rail industry.

With large vehicles now diverted away from Britain's most bashed rail bridge and the level crossing having just closed, the choice of guest speaker at our public meeting in Cambridge on Saturday 1 December could not be better timed. Ian Prosser CBE is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Railways and the director of railway safety at the Office of Rail and Road (ORR). A role that is all about the safety of everyone who uses, comes into contact with, and works on the railway.



He is responsible for the work of the Railway Safety Directorate, which strives to ensure duty-holders in the railway industry manage health and safety risks effectively and thus comply with their statutory duties. The Secretary of State appointed him to the Board of ORR with effect from 26 September 2008. In the 2018 National Rail Awards organised by RAIL magazine, Ian won the "Outstanding personal contribution (senior management)" category, where the citation highlighted his "superb contribution to rail safety". This will be a rare chance to hear from a recognised expert on a truly vital aspect of the rail industry - an opportunity not to be missed. Join us from 14:00 at St Paul's Church Hall, on Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 1JP, a little over five minutes' walk from the station. Walk down Station Road and at the end turn

right into Hills Road, the venue is on the right about 250 metres down the road.

# MELDRETH, SHEPRETH AND FOXTON LATEST NEWS

BY SUSAN VAN DE VEN OF THE LOCAL USER GROUP

**Restoring services and confidence:** In late September 2018 our rail user group (RUG) met senior Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR) staff at King's Cross to press for the restoration of the May 2018 timetable and re-introduction of at least a minimum of semi-fast London services. Two missing May services had just been reintroduced and we were told the rest of our weekday services should be restored by December 2018.

Meldreth Station car park no longer looks abandoned (see the photo in RAIL EAST 179). Delays and cancellations continue to occur and it will take time to re-establish confidence, but we're moving in a positive direction. It's good to have some established half-hourlies.

Restoration of missing weekend services will not begin until the weekdays have been built back, after December. This is obviously key for shift workers and leisure activities. In the circumstances, we can't support any plans for fare increases in January 2019.

As a RUG, managing through the months of timetable meltdown chaos was made possible by the excellent communication platforms established in spring 2018 by our Community Rail Partnership Officer Sarah Grove, and supported by our station manager Bern Parsons, pictured right, behind the ticket window. Bern keeps the active MSF RUG Facebook page updated with any service changes.

**Platform shelters at last:** All three of our stations will be getting new shelters on the Cambridge platforms. For Meldreth Station, the first ever Cambridge platform shelter will be installed, we are told, by March 2019 (aptly timed given anticipated Brexit chaos!). For Shepreth and Foxton, new platforms will be situated on the elongated new platforms by December.

**Cycle park provision at Meldreth** remains astonishingly poor. An announcement not too long ago that new high-quality cycle parking was on the way seems to have been forgotten by GTR – but not by the community!



**Access for All:** Meldreth is home to an important residential school for profoundly disabled children, and an expanding dementia care home. Yet the station is profoundly inaccessible. With much local support, our Access for All application has been submitted to GTR.

**The next MSF Rail User Group meeting** takes place on 5 December 2018, 19.30 – 21.00 at Meldreth Elin Way Community Room – a five-minute walk from the station. Everyone is welcome.

CRP Website: [www.meldrethsheprethfoxtonrail.org.uk](http://www.meldrethsheprethfoxtonrail.org.uk)  
Twitter: @meldrethrug



# LOCAL CAMPAIGN FOR STEP-FREE ACCESS

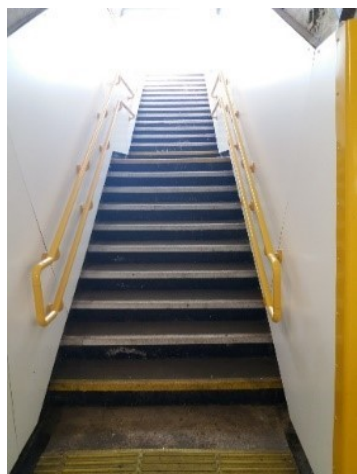
## AN ISSUE THAT AFFECTS US ALL—BY JEN OVERETT

Autumn 2018 makes it 20 months since, as a new resident to and commuter from Needham Market, I stood on the Ipswich-bound station platform waiting for the train to Ipswich, yet I still vividly remember my sense of shock and disgust as I did so. Shock that, in this day and age, one of the platforms is still only accessible via 49 steep steps and an underpass, and disgust that although Greater Anglia spent £650,000 on station improvements here in 2016 it completely failed to address this inaccessibility.



I decided then and there to start a petition to fight for improvements and submitted a brief letter to the Town Council magazine inviting other residents to join me. I quickly learnt that local councillors had tried to redress the lack of access on two other occasions since 2010 but had been firmly told by Network Rail that footfall was too low to be a priority for funding and we needed to “wait our turn.” After so many years of waiting and given that the access issues are SO severe at Needham, a group of a dozen or so of us agreed we would kick-start a fresh campaign.

Nearly two years on, we remain a committed group of local residents and cross-party councillors who meet regularly with representatives of the County Council, District Council, Greater Anglia and Network Rail. We have the support of Railfuture, MARPA and The Campaign for Better Transport, a Facebook and Twitter profile, and have had regular coverage in the East Anglian, Bury Free Press and on Radio Suffolk. We are a Community Interest Company with funds to maintain our campaign raised by coffee mornings and other regular social gatherings. Through media coverage and by running stalls at local events, speaking to various groups, and with excellent assistance from many local businesses, the petition (paper and online) currently has almost 3,000 signatures - not bad for a ‘low-footfall’ station!



A group of campaigners has twice been to Westminster to meet with Chris Grayling, Secretary of State for Transport, and subsequently Nusrat Ghani, Under-Secretary of State, when the access issues at Needham Market station were made clear to both. Specifically, these are: firstly, that wheelchair-users cannot access the rail service currently; and secondly, that the steps (see photo, left) cause unacceptable levels of difficulty and danger for passengers with limited mobility, and others with buggies, young children, heavy luggage or bicycles. The additional and proven risk and distress to passengers disembarking from the Cambridge direction being trapped on an inaccessible platform, with no Help Point and no accessible shelter at this un-staffed train station was also made clear.

Within the current Access for All process outlined in RAIL EAST 179, a formal request for Government funding for step-free access via a ramp to the second platform has recently been made to Greater Anglia with proactive support at County and District level and from our MP Jo Churchill - we await further news at the end of this year. If unsuccessful in our bid for funds for Network Rail’s Control Period 6 (2019-2024) the campaign will not stop here as we will continue to fight for a local station which is compliant with disability law and accessible to all.

I have very much appreciated the support of Railfuture and the opportunity to talk about the campaign at the Ipswich branch meeting in June 2018. It has been a privilege to have been warmly welcomed, and knowledgeably advised, by a group of interested local rail campaigners who share my passion for a high-quality, reliable

and accessible train service. Whilst it could be argued that membership is currently predominantly 'older white male', I can personally confirm that there is a welcoming space for more members from a range of diverse backgrounds. With the recent warning from scientists that we have 12 years to avert climate change catastrophe, the vital importance of a thriving sustainable transport system has become increasingly obvious. I strongly believe that a commitment by the rail companies and Government to a fully accessible train service for ALL groups of people within our society is something well worth fighting for by every one of us.



### **Campaigners meet Nusrat Ghani MP and Jo Churchill MP – June 2018**

You can sign the online Needham Market petition at [tinyurl.com/needhamstation](https://tinyurl.com/needhamstation)

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## **FEEDBACK TO RAIL EAST**

### **CAMBRIDGE NORTH ARTICLE IN RAIL EAST 179 (SEPTEMBER 2018)**

Although RAIL EAST does not have a letters page, feedback (preferably via email to [raileast@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:raileast@railfuture.org.uk)) is welcomed. The article about the missed opportunities to make Cambridge North an undeniable success straight away resulted in a response from the Leader of Cambridgeshire County Council, which played a major role in ensuring the station finally opened. The council pointed out that it is, like Railfuture, trying to persuade Cross Country to call at the new station. Regarding the points made in the article, it has agreed to look at the inadequate signage directing people to the station and promised to contact Cambridge City Council to cut back the vegetation obscuring the little signage that does exist.



# GREATER ANGLIA STATION ADOPTERS' CEREMONY

## BY BEN WALSH—A LONG-TIME STATION ADOPTER

The date was 12 October 2018 and the venue Ipswich Town Football Club. Started by Anglia Railways, this was the 15th year of the on-going award scheme, and every year, it seems to go from strength to strength!

There were 100 or more people gathered together in the Bobby Robson Suite for this year's ceremony – representing station groups from Hertfordshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. Individuals and groups nominated from over forty stations attended the day, with awards under a range of categories – including “unsung hero”, “best newcomer”, “best personal contribution”, “best community involvement” etc. – going to adopters involved in stations including Newmarket, Bures, Shelford, Stowmarket, Diss, Burnham on Crouch and Reedham.



*Station Adopters from Shelford (one of the prize-winners), Newport, Roydon and Cambridge*

The citations for each winner painted a very encouraging picture of how across the Greater Anglia network individuals and groups were devoting their time and energy to making the physical environment of local stations as attractive as possible. The event also emphasised the work done at several stations to use redundant buildings to house displays relevant to the local community – natural history at Shelford, the history of the railway itself at Reedham, to offer two examples.

We heard from Paul Webster, from the Association of Community Rail Partnerships, who told us how station adoption was growing, nationally, and how station adopters could apply for grants to further develop their activities.

In the interval, at lunch time, a big buffet lunch spread was provided by the catering team at Portman Road, to everyone's delight.

I think everyone left, for another year, feeling that it was a successful outcome and looking forward to next year. Roll on 2019!



*In August 2018 Ben visited the Garden Event organised by the West Runton station adopters, on the line between Cromer and Sheringham (all photos by Ben Walsh).*



## AWARD WINNING CAMBRIDGE STATION - ONE YEAR ON

### BY JERRY ALDERSON

Congratulations to the Greater Anglia staff at Ipswich station and everyone else whose work contributed towards winning the Large Station of the Year award (the second largest grouping, behind Major Station) at the National Rail Awards ceremony in September (photo below). Key reasons were the £2 million refurbishment that saw its main foyer and ticket hall completely revamped.



Similar passenger-benefit reasons saw Cambridge station win the same award in 2017. It has become one of the largest and most important stations in East Anglia so let's take stock and also look at what could and should happen in the future.

Next to the excellent Station Tavern beneath the Ibis hotel there is now a second pub, named the Old Ticket Office. Other underused parts of the station are also being refurbished and given a useful purpose. The AMT coffee shop on the island platform has much expanded opening hours. Cambridge soon followed Chelmsford and Ipswich in having a fountain for topping up water containers, reducing the environmentally-insane practice of one-use plastic bottles. All these are welcome changes, as are the planned eight-car platforms at Waterbeach and Watlington, which will bring relief to the overcrowding on afternoon and peak services departing for Waterbeach, Ely and beyond.

The car park is now controlled by automatic number-plate recognition, and the new parking machines (under cover in the cycle park entrance) are quite sophisticated, largely avoiding the chance of mistyping the car registration number. A real-time train info screen above the machines would be useful, but at least there is now one at the entrance to the car park, with a help point below it (photo, taken at night-time, right).



Passengers expect constant improvements and Railfuture East Anglia is helping to build the case for some of them. We are pushing at an open door according to Greater Anglia's Managing Director Jamie Burles who mentioned that £4m was earmarked for passenger-focused improvements when he spoke at the Railfuture East Anglia meeting in December 2016 in Cambridge. There is no shortage of ideas.

Probably easiest to rectify is TVM availability. In 2018 too many of the 10 TVMs have been out of action. It seems to be a GA-wide problem and has improved.

Let's start with an improvement needing no capital expenditure. Most retail outlets on platforms 1 and 4 close too early, especially on Saturdays, which is the busiest day at Cambridge thanks to locals going to London and foreign tourists. GA told Railfuture it cannot force businesses to open longer. But it can surely offer encouragement. A good passenger experience means more future passengers.

When rail replacement buses operate from Cambridge the unwelcome and over-the-top practice of preventing any cars from entering the car park (except for occupants with a disabled badge) continues. At least those who parked earlier can still leave! There have been occasions when Cambridge North station, with its currently very underused car park, has been used. However, the ultimate problem is that access into and out of the car park is extremely restricted, a nightmare to some, and a major planning mistake, with some advocating a second entrance/exit and others alternative car parking - more on that subject below.

Outside the station there is now a small seat and shelter near to the taxi rank – something that didn't previously exist – but it isn't close to the kerb or the front of queue and there are no marks on the pavement or queuing discipline for those waiting. It is more suited to having a rest and eating a sandwich!

The old toilets were relocated in order to make space for the large ticket hall but the size of the facilities have not kept pace with the doubling of passenger numbers in the last decade. Moreover, the new island platform was built without any sewerage. The 'meeters and greeters', especially those waiting for delayed trains, rely upon the willingness of barrier staff to let them use the toilets or seats, for there is not a single seat before the barriers.

More London-bound trains now depart from platforms 7 and 8, which have long canopies, but there is very little cover if waiting to board 12-car trains on platform 1. The same for eight-car trains departing platforms 2 and 3 (latter has nothing).

One doesn't just get wet when standing around waiting but also when entering and leaving the station. When the massive cycle park was being designed Railfuture asked for a direct (covered) link from it to the new footbridge used to access the island platforms. Depending on which platform was required it could save two or even three minutes' walk. The only operational cost is additionally barriers, but staffing is not an issue as they could be remotely monitored. The new link could also be used by people coming from the car park. Improvements can be made incrementally, but one big-ticket item would be a real game changer...

A priority for Railfuture East Anglia, not least because rail users and others are calling for it, is an eastern entrance to the station. Whether this is an extension to the existing footbridge or an entirely new one further south will be decided by a formal development and planning process. Railfuture has done research on this subject and has been putting together a proposal for stakeholders. For passengers the main benefit will be a reduced time to and from the station, which may be enough to tip their travel choices firmly in favour of rail. It could save 10-15 minutes in each direction, makes the entertainment venues on the eastern side more attractive and has the potential to use existing multi-storey car parking facilities. Railfuture East Anglia will be publishing its thoughts on the website in the future.



RAIL magazine covered Cambridge station's 2017 win



## **GTR — GO FORWARD WITH FERVOUR VERWER**

### **CHRIS BURTON PROFILES NEW BOSS OF BRITAIN'S LARGEST OPERATOR**

Govia Thameslink Railway's (GTR) recently-appointed Chief Executive Officer is Patrick Verwer (pronounced "ferver"). For a senior transport executive he has an unexpected CV: he's Dutch and studied sociology in their police force, attaining the rank of Chief Superintendent before joining Netherlands railway management in 1991. Chris Burton had the opportunity to hear him speak (and asked him a question or two) at a meeting in Cambridge in late October, when only three months into the job, and uses information previously in the public domain, including GTR Stakeholder meetings that Railfuture has attended, to give RAIL EAST readers a profile of the man and the challenges he faces.



Patrick Verwer was Managing Director of London Midland between January 2012 and December 2017. Before that he worked in the transport industry in the UK and Europe, specialising in rail and airport services. He first came to the UK in 2003 as Managing Director of Merseyrail and was in charge of London Midland Trains from January 2012 until it lost the franchise for West Midlands routes in December 2017.

His outlook is still that of the railway outsider, being a specialist in human behaviour, rather than technology, high-finance and railway tradition generally. He does not claim ignorance of any one of those aspects, merely that he is not a specialist. But he does employ people who are proven specialists. He has a deserved reputation for turning round failing franchises - specifically Merseyrail and London Midland, with the latter suffering from staff shortages that severely impacted on the service to passengers.

On his appointment as GTR CEO, taking over from Charles Horton who resigned following sustained continuous poor service on parts of GTR (some of it entirely out of his control), Mr Verwer said "I look forward to working with my new colleagues to deliver on the transformation that is already underway at GTR. My focus will be on ensuring we meet the needs of our customers each and every day." In a series of musical chairs he had been appointed Chief Operating Officer (COO) only in March 2018, reporting to Horton, in a role not expected to start until September 2018. Instead he was elevated to the alleged poison chalice of CEO starting in July.

Who banged each nail into the coffin of May 2018's timetable is now history. See <http://orr.gov.uk/rail/publications/reports/inquiry-into-may-2018-network-disruption> and <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/article1797-Murder-on-the-Thameslink---Northern-Express-> by Railfuture. Clearly the railway was quite incapable of mandating anyone to tell the Department for Transport (DfT) that the May 2018 timetable was undeliverable. Secondly, even if the industry had managed this, the DfT would not have accepted such an ultimatum in any case, because of the political pressures on them.

Another nine months ought to see the timetable that passengers expect operating well. This relies upon the Class 700 trains' reliability improving greatly - currently way below that of London Midland's Class 350/1 at a similar stage of introduction. Railfuture is not alone in being critical that one of the two fast trains per hour on the money-spinning Cambridge-King's Cross route would be removed each weekend from the December 2018 timetable change, which is largely down to Network Rail. It would make diverting via the Hertford Loop feasible during the planned maintenance work on the main line. But Govia has stated at stakeholder meetings that it certainly hoped to return these services to the timetable from May 2019.

As Railfuture members know, there has been huge underinvestment in infrastructure across Britain, not just in GTR's area. For someone like Patrick Verwer, this would be a poor comparison with Dutch railways where a good business case invariably gets funded.

# ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT ON GREAT NORTHERN

## AN UPDATE ON WEEKEND TRAIN SERVICES BY PETER WAKEFIELD

As has been well documented, the new timetable promised for May 2018 on the Great Northern and Thameslink Cambridge/Peterborough lines got off to a very shaky start to say the least. Only now is the Monday to Friday service beginning to bed in with promises that it will finally be put right from December 2018. This is when we had assumed the Saturday/Sunday service would be restored too. However, on enquiry with GN as to what the situation will be, we received this reply from their spokesperson:

"The focus now for our teams is to deliver on their aims for **May 2019** and the proposals they will bid to Network Rail will see the weekend service restored **to at least its pre-May level across the network, with increases on that where possible**. I understand for weekend passengers this may be difficult to swallow but we cannot as an industry ignore the lessons of May and risk rendering our published timetables an irrelevance once more."

This is a very poor outcome. Currently the Cambridge to London King's Cross Saturday train service is operating at one fast train per hour, one semi per hour and one stopping service. The missing second fast train is causing much impatience as the numbers using Cambridge and stations en route is higher on Saturday than Monday - Friday and the service now being provided is not coping. The restoration of a fuller Saturday service must be treated with urgency and in place well before May 2019.

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## BETTER ARRIVA LATE THAN NEVER?

### SOME CROSS COUNTRY CHALLENGES BY CHRIS BURTON

The extension of the Cross Country franchise for a further five years ought to be wholly good news. But it isn't! Nothing has been promised to ease overcrowding during this extended period. That is, apart from a vague assertion delivered in the House of Lords that "The Department (*for Transport*) will consider rolling stock and train service options that will reduce overcrowding, but it is too early, at present, to say what the detail of that will be." This is no encouragement to passengers who have to stand. But what to do?

The cheapest option once ScotRail has shed most of its three-car class 170s – the rolling stock travellers using the "regional" Greater Anglia routes in Norfolk and Suffolk will be most familiar with – is to cascade some of these displaced units to the Cross Country franchise to lengthen trains. This would also benefit the Cardiff - Nottingham service. As for re-equipping with brand new rolling stock, we need to be careful about what we wish for.

The present Voyagers offer the best acceleration of any diesel passenger train in Britain, only really challenged by Alstom's class 180s (too unreliable) and the just-coming-on-stream four- and five-coach cut-down versions of Intercity 125s, emerging into squadron service with ScotRail. Bi-modes, as currently available, seem unlikely to compete and would slow-up long distance Cross-Country services. This despite using the 25kV wires from Manchester to Coventry and, eventually, all the way from Doncaster/Leeds to Edinburgh and Glasgow.

And what might replace our Stansted-Birmingham class 170s? That's a much foggier issue: some of those short formation IC125s (with ample guard's van space for air travellers' bags/cycles) would be ideal; bi-modes too might fit the bill, whether Hitachi or Stadler, but not enough is known about them thus far. A critical factor is axle weight – we certainly don't want journey times extended because of speed restrictions!



On the service from Stansted Airport (Cross Country train at bay platform, photo right) via Ely to Birmingham, Railfuture seeks late night services, acknowledging the 30 or so flights landing at Stansted Airport between 22:00 and close down at 23:35. Then we have people at Peterborough wishing to connect from East Coast Main Line services to East Anglia bound trains. Equally, with Cambridge being the rapidly growing social/employment hub that it is, late night services are overdue.



To these requests we continue to cry out for an earlier Sunday morning service. Waiting several years for these improvements to materialise is, in the words of my fellow Vice Chair, "not an option". (See further Peter Wakefield's item in RAIL EAST issue 178.)

Unfortunately, the other factor which could make a substantial improvement to Stansted - Birmingham travel times is beyond the franchisee's control, and this is infrastructure - track and signalling. Network Rail holds the purse NR holds the purse containing whatever cash the government is prepared to drop into it. Here so much needs to be done, primarily up to and including Leicester, that a business case would be substantially expensive, and in any event largely led by the freight sector. Much else is proposed in the latest (October 2018) issue of RAILWATCH by fellow Railfuture Passenger Group member Steve Wright, from Birmingham. Give it a read and let us know what you think. Steve and I are already planning a meeting with Arriva. We'd also appreciate a similar head-to-head with a Department for Transport representative. Watch this space!

*Editor's note: Something Chris forgot to mention is the wish by Railfuture East Anglia, and other stakeholders, for Cross Country to serve Cambridge North station.*

## GETTING THERE BY PUBLIC TRANSPORT

### THE CHALLENGE TO MAKE IT "SEAMLESS" BY TREVOR GARROD

The Long Shop at Leiston is a unique industrial museum (see photo below) open annually from March to October. Its attractive 2018 leaflet advises that it is "10 minutes from the A12" with free parking. There is no mention whatever of public transport access, yet at least one bus an hour, six days a week, calls at the entrance.

The [www.longshopmuseum.co.uk](http://www.longshopmuseum.co.uk) website, however, does mention the train service between Ipswich, Saxmundham and Lowestoft and the bus link to Leiston.

I have therefore written to the Museum, urging that its 2019 publicity should give more prominence to the train and bus link and include mention of the through ticketing introduced by Greater Anglia and First Eastern Counties in July 2018.



A Railfuture member described a journey he tried to make from Norwich to Wells-next-the-Sea on 16 October 2018. The plan was to use the train to Sheringham and Coasthopper bus from the stop by the

station. However, the half-hourly bus service, which should have continued to 27 October, had been reduced to hourly at the beginning of October and the bus leaves Sheringham six to nine minutes before the train arrives from Norwich. This is clearly not the best current example of integrated transport in our region.

Sometimes tourist attractions are an easy walk from the station, and the 2018 Guide to Harwich and Dovercourt shows recommended walking routes from each of the town's three stations. Bus stops are also shown, but no routes. It would also be helpful if the guide could mention Plus Bus for those people unable to walk far.

Norwich Cathedral publishes an attractive leaflet which encourages visitors to take the 10-minute walk from the railway station via the river bank and Pulls Ferry, which is largely on the level – an attractive and tranquil route away from the noise and vehicle emissions of central Norwich.

Meanwhile, in summer 2018 Railfuture East Anglia sent the House of Commons Transport Select Committee our report on Seamless Public Transport in East Anglia, as the Committee was studying the issue nationwide. A reply from the Department for Transport focussed on the 2017 Bus Services Act and its requirements for bus operators to open up their data on routes, timetables and real-time information - as other modes, such as rail, have already done. (The report, summarised in RAIL EAST 177, is available at:

[www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Seamless+Public+Transport.](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Seamless+Public+Transport.))

This will certainly make it easier for would-be passengers to obtain multimodal timetable and fare information - but we shall have to keep campaigning locally for bus bays at stations and passenger information screens at strategic locations. We shall also still need to prompt leaflet and website publishers to mention rail and, where appropriate, bus access.

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## THE CASE FOR MORE STATIONS IN SUFFOLK

BY JOHN MATTHIESSON

The recent surge of climate change to its rightful place near the top of the political agenda should bring forward new proposals for railway improvements. A notable gap in railway station provision in East Anglia is that between Stowmarket and Norwich on the Great Eastern Mainline (GEM), noting that Diss is almost unique in being served only by main line trains. Recent discussion in RAIL EAST has properly addressed the case for additional provision for expanding populations in Norfolk, but there's an equally compelling case for similar thinking in Suffolk.

Back in the 1980s the Mid-Suffolk Green Party proposed that Mellis and Finningham stations should be reopened. More recently this proposal was revised in response to Network Rail's ideas for decking over-crowded car parks at Stowmarket and elsewhere.

Now, the need to invest in low carbon infrastructure is urgent. Councils in Norfolk and Suffolk should be proposing to the LEP that they fund a rolling programme of loops and station reinstatement, beginning where current day population densities are highest and growing, such as Finningham and its adjoining village of Bacton. Excluding Haughley junction there are up to seven locations which would be candidates for reinstated provision.

The link provides a useful reminder of how much the railway infrastructure associated with the GEM in East Anglia has shrunk since its Victorian heyday: [https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern\\_Union\\_Railway#/media/File%3AEasternunion1853.png](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Union_Railway#/media/File%3AEasternunion1853.png)



## “MIND THE GAP”

### FINANCIAL PROBLEMS AT GREATER ANGLIA? BY PETER FEENEY

In mid-August 2016 we learned that Abellio would continue to run train services in East Anglia albeit paying a considerable sum to the government for the privilege:

**Abellio to pay ‘heroic’ £3.7bn Anglia premium**  
by PASSENGER TRANSPORT on Aug 18, 2016 • 12:51 pm

Readers will probably be aware of a story that broke during October 2018 which may – or may not – have longer term implications for one of our two current franchise holders in East Anglia. News emerged of an £80 million shortfall in Greater Anglia (GA) revenue, attributed to what some media described as “crippling” payments back to the Department for Transport as part of the current franchise agreement. The Daily Telegraph was just one several newspapers to cover the issue, but its headline told only part of the story:

**The Daily Telegraph** | Business LEAD STORY Wed 17 Oct

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## Rail firm bailed out by the Dutch

By Oliver Gill

BRITISH and Dutch ministers are heading for a rail showdown after it emerged that the Netherlands has led an £80m rescue package for one of Britain’s biggest networks.

Greater Anglia, which operates one in every 12 UK rail journeys and is majority-owned by the Dutch state rail operator, is being forced to make crippling payments to the Department for Transport (DfT) – pushing its finances into the red.

The problem in the small print relates to the “Central London Employment Mechanism” (CLE), a measure introduced in earlier franchises to manage revenue flows, by controlling the scale of profits train operators could make in the event of rapid expansion in commuter numbers. The mechanism was intended both to manage the peaks of high passenger volumes and the corresponding troughs of declines in passenger numbers – and it seems that the specifics of the mechanism have not provided Greater Anglia with sufficient protection against those troughs in the passenger cycle. Hence the shortfall, made up by a contribution from GA’s majority shareholder, the Dutch state-owned operator Abellio. Cue newspaper reports of “tense discussions” between the British and Dutch governments.

Media reporting has not always been super-accurate on the story. Little if any of the coverage has, for instance, noted that Abellio [owned by NedRailways (Nederlandse Spoorwegen)] is in a 60:40 shares arrangement with the Japanese finance house, Mitsui. One implication from this is that the “hit” taken by “The Dutch tax payer” – a frequent media line – will be £48 million with Japanese contributing £32 million.

Two further facts have emerged from media coverage of the story. One is that Abellio is in negotiation with the Department over the terms of the CLE mentioned above. The operator’s view is that as currently implemented it constitutes an unreasonable financial penalty. The Abellio press release spoke of the need to agree on “more effective risk-sharing models”. Other recent franchises where the mechanism is relevant operate to different terms, and Abellio not unreasonably would like the Greater Anglia franchise to be run in a similar fashion. And secondly – far more relevant to the travelling public in the region – the operator has been at pains to emphasise that the planned introduction of the new train fleet from 2019 will not be affected by current revenue issues. This is good news for all keen to experience a more efficient and reliable railway – not least MPs on the Great Eastern Main Line Task Group, who have written to the Secretary of State seeking assurances over the future of the franchise, scheduled to run until 2025.

# STADLER — A SWISS SUCCESS STORY

## JERRY ALDERSON VISITED THEIR HEADQUARTERS AND FACTORY

RAIL EAST readers will have already heard much about Greater Anglia's entirely brand new train fleet, which will enter service between 2019 and 2020, and no doubt they have seen many photos as well. However, there has been far less publicity about Swiss train manufacturer Stadler Rail, which will be building almost half of the new fleet, in cost terms, comprising 20 x 12-car electric multiple units (emus) plus 14 x 3-car and 24 x 4-car bi-modes (only the second modern bi-modes in Britain after GWR's new inter-city trains). Both types of trains are based on the latest version of its best-selling distributed-power FLIRT train, named to signify that it is a fast, light innovative regional train.

Stadler, which started as a very small business and has remained a privately - owned concern ever since, has been supplying passenger vehicles to Britain for less than a decade, but it has won several orders in that time. The first was trams for London Tramlink (having entered service in 2012), tram-trains for Sheffield Supertram (which have been operating on Network Rail since 25 October 2018 [photograph right is at the new Rotherham Parkgate terminus] but in the streets before that), 'driverless' underground trains for the Glasgow Subway (due to enter service in 2020) and now, with Greater Anglia and subsequently Merseyrail, its first orders for mainline trains.



It has preferred bidder status in Wales and more orders will undoubtedly follow. In fact Stadler only decided in 2015 to enter the British mainline train market, just in time for the GA franchise bid.



Stadler's factory is next to the railway line and just metres from the two-platform station, with employees and visitors using a barrow crossing. The main entrance is via various offices, and surprisingly there is no high-security fencing preventing entry



Although now having a high profile the company is still eager to show visitors around its sites and explain its business. Railfuture took up that opportunity in September 2018 (at no cost to members), visiting its headquarters and main factory in Bussnang, which is in the north east corner of Switzerland, about an hour away from Zurich by train. Stadler manufactures bogies at nearby Winterthur and also uses a small train test site in the region. Although much of the manufacturing takes place at Bussnang, some of the train shells are imported from Hungary. The tour began with an hour-long presentation by Stadler management, including a senior manager who had flown in from London ironically to speak to people who had also come from Britain. Each room in the office was named after a Stadler train type, such as FLIRT. Others included Komet, KISS and GTW. At the time of the visit 32 projects were in progress at the facility. Not everything was a new build, as it included some refurbishment and conversion work as well. Stadler uses modern manufacturing methods to be competitive. For example, longitudinal welding is performed by robots.



Bussnang is a village with a population of 2,300 and Stadler is a major part of it. The train factory is right next to the railway station and has connections to the railway so that vehicles can be brought in and out. It has its own electric locos (photo left) to take the trains to its test sites. Stadler's unique selling point is their complete flexibility. They will build any type of rail vehicle that their customers want, even very small orders of perhaps just two trains, using existing designs where possible, modifying them accordingly, but they will

design something entirely new if required. GA wanted its trains to be fast looking so the livery includes a slant. One thing Stadler does insist on, though, is articulation (carriages sharing wheels), which makes the trains lighter overall. However, safety rules may mean, including in GA's case, that only pairs of its emus are articulated. Weight-reduction is a key feature of Stadler's vehicles just as it is on aeroplanes. On some of the train shells it was possible to see the milled slots (i.e. holes) on the inside to reduce weight without affecting structural integrity.

On the day of the visit five GA bi-modes had been manufactured. One had just been in Berlin as part of the InnoTrains industry exhibition and the other four were undergoing testing far away (the first arriving at Crown Point in Norwich on 15 November 2018 having come via the Channel Tunnel, see Tweet on next page). There was a chance to walk inside one of the carriages of the London-

Norwich/Stansted Express 12-car emus being built for Greater Anglia. It was almost entirely complete.

The new train arrives at Crown Point #newtrains

The train incorporates the features needed for the type of passengers the trains will serve, such as large luggage racks for suitcases, two coat hooks at either side of windows and small rubbish bins by door as people exit. There are some features that will be new to British trains but are more common on the European mainland. Like all new trains there will be facilities to



charge laptops and mobile devices. The 3-pin sockets are upside down so that the cable is facing the user, effectively making it longer. Naturally the sockets also contain a USB port, which is now the more useful way of charging. GA is committed to provide high-quality Wi-Fi and mobile signals on all of its trains. As the toughened train glass can prevent the signal there are fine wires embedded in the windows.

Disabled travellers have already visited to see how the trains will cater for them. The carriage had rows of tip-up seats on each side of the train with bicycle straps on tip-up seats so that they could be securely fastened. There are dynamic gap fillers below the doors. Of course, only a proportion of seats need to be accessible, so some seats required a step up, which gives passengers a better view. Information screens are in the centre of the carriage and also in the vestibule, so you don't need to be very long-sighted to read them.

Despite sharing common components, there are differences between the emus and the bi-modes. For example the emus are like trams with no inter-carriage doors whereas the bi-mode trains have doors partly to limit engine noise. The emus have one exterior cameras per carriage for the driver to check that the doors are clear but on the bi-mode they are on the "power-pack" segment in the middle of the train. The red and white colour scheme is inverted on the bi-mode trains.

On the emus the first and last bogies of the units are powered. They are built as 'married pairs', meaning the 12-car is operationally two six-car units so there are four powered bogies per train. This will still give the high-speed and fast acceleration that GA needs, and have resilience if there is a fault.

Of course, the major difference between the two types is that bi-modes will have a walk-through 'power-pack' section in the middle. Although FLIRT is a new design, the concept of powering the train from the centre, an approach also taken by British Rail's APT, originated in Stadler's GTW trains used on relatively slow-speed branch lines. The photo (right) shows the power-pack segment on a GTW train operating in Switzerland, and GA's will look similar.



Passengers will be pleased by the curved seats, rather than the "ironing boards" on GTR's trains. The seats are cantilevered to aid cleaning underneath, apart from the row at the end of the carriage where they are above traction equipment.

Bi-modes are sometimes incorrectly called hybrids – the term means two concurrent states. The GA bi-modes switch between electricity and diesel but don't use both at the same time. However, Stadler said the trains might be operated as hybrids where the electricity supply is insufficient (e.g. third rail in southern England) and could be assisted by diesel engines. One thing is certain, Stadler have a solution for almost every type of railway, and a lot of passengers in Britain will be travelling on their vehicles in the future.



# NEWS FROM THE NORFOLK ORBITAL RAILWAY

BY DAVID BILL

Progress remains slow but steady. We have a foothold at Holt and plan to lay a demonstration length of track soon. At Fakenham we have restored the two bridges we acquired along with a further length of track bed and are working with the local community with a view to opening up the prospect of a return of the railway to the town. It would help if we could stop the constant vandalism at this end of the project. The improvements to the Mid-Norfolk's infrastructure through its involvement with Greater Anglia all bode well for the future.

We are now engaged with Norfolk County Council with a view to encouraging the notion that its proposed Recycling Railways project, which is aimed at using former railway routes for walking and cycling, should also be looking at restoring them for their original purpose. Most of the routes are in private hands but in many instances station buildings are still in situ. Some of us have long been of the opinion that all railway routes should have been mothballed or at least protected from unwelcome development. The route between Dereham and Fakenham West has a protection order and, of course, the Mid-Norfolk has already run works trains to North Elmham. Public trains are planned for its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2020.

Apart from the need to raise funds to complete the purchase of the route at Holt, and indeed be able to acquire further stretches, we face the challenge of the need to safeguard the future of the former Midland & Great Northern (M&GN) Railway Institute at Melton Constable, an iconic building still in use which also serves as our HQ. The long term aim is still to restore passenger services to towns such as Holt and Fakenham. We are still the same people who objected to the closures all those years ago and want to see something of what was lost put back.

We would very much welcome enquiries into our activities and any offers of financial or technical help. Contacted me on 07779345437 or [d.bill@ntlworld.com](mailto:d.bill@ntlworld.com).

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## FIRST RAILWAY IN NORFOLK—PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE

BY TREVOR GARROD

Apart from Greater Anglia's new trains, completion of Felixstowe line capacity improvement and, hopefully, Crossrail, 2019 also sees another significant railway event for our region: the 175th anniversary of the first line in Norfolk and completion of its modernisation.

The line from Norwich to Great Yarmouth via Reedham was officially opened on 30 April 1844, when two hundred of "the great and the good" were taken by train from Norwich to Great Yarmouth and back and then enjoyed a banquet at the city's Assembly House.

For this year's anniversary, Great Yarmouth Borough Council hopes to organise a small reception. History and information boards at stations are also being planned. It is not just 19th century history that can be celebrated. In the 1980s the direct Reedham - Yarmouth line via Berney Arms needed urgent repairs and might not have survived if a consortium of local councils and user groups had not stepped in with funding.

Railfuture's local affiliated group, the East Norfolk Transport Users' Association, is working on an exhibition to be held in Great Yarmouth library and possibly other local venues as well. Likely timing of the exhibition is late April/early May 2019. The Community Rail Partnership will have a key role and other bodies with whom discussions have started include the Broads Authority, Brundall Local History Group and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.

An efficient, reasonably-priced train service for the local community, which also brings in visitors and benefits the local economy, should continue to be our aspiration. This will be one of the messages of the exhibition and other activities.

We have also asked Greater Anglia to bring one of the new Stadler bi-mode trains to Great Yarmouth - at least as a static exhibit.

If you can help, particularly with historical research and pictures for the exhibition, or have other ideas and are willing to implement these, please contact Trevor Garrod in the first instance - [trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk).

## RAIL FREIGHT IN EAST ANGLIA

### NOT JUST FELIXSTOWE/CONTAINER TRAFFIC—BY PETER WAKEFIELD

It is some time since we had a review of rail freight movement across East Anglia. There is an increasing amount of it and there are some places where it even dominates; Ely, Peterborough, Ipswich for example. Only the lines from Norwich out to Yarmouth and Lowestoft and that to Sudbury are currently passenger only.

#### Changes afoot

RAIL EAST 179 looked at the increasing volumes of container traffic from Felixstowe, but there are several other lines in East Anglia where freight traffic is important and could see further development. But those 33 daily container trains from Felixstowe do dominate the freight flows, with new infrastructure currently being put in place to cope with them, including



that mile of new track, which will in effect double the line for that distance west of Trimley, enabling up to another 10 trains each way be run daily. These works link to the relatively new curve at Ipswich that enables trains to run directly towards Bury St Edmunds and Ely. The Ely southern bypass, which has allowed the level crossing at Ely station to be removed, is part of the process that allows some of those 10 extra trains to run via Ely. The yet to be announced works around Ely including at the North Junction, at Dock Junction and on to Soham as double track instead of single and at Haughley Junction will finally unlock the capacity that's being created at Trimley....and then a lot more.

Bear in mind that all the trains making their way to and from Felixstowe either by way of Colchester or Ely carry shipping containers. There are no flows of non-shipping containers, i.e. "domestic" traffic – key movements are outlined below.

#### Minerals

Domestic general goods there may not be, but the growth in mineral traffic has been enormous...rocks and earth. One of the longest established flows out of East Anglia is that emanating from West Norfolk. The fine pure glacial silica sands found in vast quantities close to the former Middleton Towers station near King's Lynn have long been transported by rail to the glass makers in South Yorkshire. Currently there are several trains a week to modern glass makers at Goole, Doncaster and Barnsley. A more-recent flow is even longer and runs nearly every day to a new glassworks at Elton and Ince, Cheshire. In addition, a different kind of sand is taken from Trowse to Wellingborough on a daily basis.



## **Aggregates**

Aggregates of varying kinds continue to grow. The main sources are the Buxton and Loughborough areas and recently, South Wales. New flows have started this year to recently purpose built modern terminals at Cambridge North and Brandon. The current heavy traffic passing through them is connected to specific contracts such as the expansion of the A14 road and the rebuilding of military runways but will continue to serve the region after their completion.

Longer established terminals remain busy too: Ely Papworth Sidings; Kennett; Bury St Edmunds; Barham; Ipswich Griffin Wharf; Marks Tey; Eccles Road; Trowse; Norwich Yard and Hitchin. The terminals at Ely and Norwich also handle sugar stone, a limestone used as a flux in sugar processing at Wissington and Cantley sugar beet factories.

All the mineral and aggregate trains join the container train flows at Ely to travel west on to March and Peterborough. This is a very busy freight railway in both directions indeed with up to 120 freight trains every 24 hours.

## **Earth**

Spoil from huge tunnelling projects has kept the recently rebuilt and reopened Foxton to Barrington branch line busy with up to three trains a day. These trains have been carrying clean inert spoil from London to fill in chalk quarries left over from the previous cement making. Currently there is one train a day but there have been problems. The quarry company has changed operators in what seems a bit of a race to the bottom, in that recent trains have been operated by old refurbished locomotives. Their noisy diesel emissions have not thrilled residents in Barrington, especially early morning as they push and pull their heavy trains up the steep gradient to the quarry unloading pad. The "green" credentials that rail freight operators rightly boast about have stretched to incredulity even though of course the alternative 70 HGVs per train would have given those upset by the noisy railway engines something seriously bad to protest about. There is another large hole at the quarry to fill in and doing this has been subject to a prolonged planning application owing to the pushback by residents. Fortunately for the rail operators, permission has been recently granted but with conditions. The industry must keep at the forefront of best practice and keep its locomotive fleets in line with the latest emission and general environmental standards.

## **Blocks**

A long-established rail borne traffic has been the daily train carrying breeze-type blocks from Yorkshire to Biggleswade for local distribution. It is shame that our local block and brick industries, for example at Brandon and Whittlesea, are not using rail to expand their markets.

## **North Sea Condensate**

Two or three times a week 2,000-tonne tanker trains operate to the Carless oil refinery at Harwich Essex carrying the liquid phase produced by condensation of natural gas that comes ashore from the North Sea gas fields at Bacton (near North Walsham), where it is stabilised and piped to the North Walsham rail terminal via an underground pipeline on the former North Walsham to Mundesley railway.

## **The future...be more entrepreneurial?**

Much if not all the above will continue to expand. But what of other potential traffics? Many of our towns are still important centres of processing agricultural produce...Wisbech, Lowestoft, Yarmouth come to mind and are very important logistic centres. These are places that should be producing domestic container/ swap-body trains to other parts of the UK.

## Lowestoft

Lowestoft is particularly interesting as a recent local press article said that Network Rail resignalling work will leave five acres of port-side land criss-crossed by sidings accessible to full sized freight trains once more. It is for sale.

The Railfuture Freight Group wryly tweeted that this land “might interest an entrepreneurial railfreight company (FOC)”. ‘Might’, as FOCs are operating on low returns so are risk averse - but the low hanging fruits of easy bulk traffics will dry up. Operators have to take risks and develop new traffic at places like Lowestoft, with its growing service industry of keeping the North Sea wind farms working.

Land for rail freight terminals such as that at Lowestoft is in short supply. Nearly all former railway land has been sold for non-rail use or is back in use as at Brandon.

## Supermarkets

The one big non-deep sea container market rail should be the serving is the supermarkets all over East Anglia. Supermarket companies successfully operate trains from the Midlands distribution warehouses to Scotland including Aberdeen and Inverness, to South Wales, to London. Norwich as a rail head for Norfolk and Suffolk supermarkets is a long journey by rail, comparable to Daventry to South Wales. This traffic is currently carried by HGVs over the single carriageway A47 to Norfolk. Let's get it onto rail.

## Sizewell C Power Station

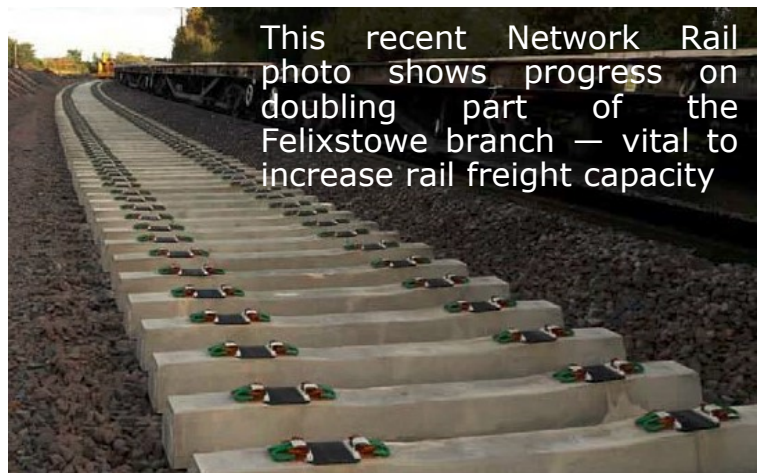
This is the big future project. It is anticipated that much of the building material will be railed into the site. Railfuture submitted evidence to the second stage public consultation for Sizewell setting out the case for doubling the line between Woodbridge and Saxmundham. This could have a lasting legacy of benefits for passengers after the construction works have finished, allowing faster and more frequent services along the East Suffolk Line. We are expecting the third stage consultation in early 2019 and will cover this in a future edition of RAIL EAST.

## Other potential rail traffic

There is timber from Thetford forest and bio fuel pellets. Planning permission was granted for a factory at Ely that would turn straw into bio-fuel pellets. The end user at Norwich failed to achieve planning permission for the power station but maybe this will emerge as a traffic in the future.

## Finally...capacity

This brief overview illustrates how railfreight continues to be strong and growing in East Anglia. It is difficult to imagine our fragile road network operating without the loads taken off it by the huge container, mineral and aggregate trains. Our economy works because of railfreight...as do our lungs...the air we breathe would be even more toxic without railfreight.



This recent Network Rail photo shows progress on doubling part of the Felixstowe branch — vital to increase rail freight capacity

However, to get more onto the rails we need more capacity between **Ipswich-Ely/Cambridge-March-Peterborough** as mentioned above. Cambridge is relevant because East West Rail could be part of the answer if capacity was built into that project for about 20 container trains each way per day. And that single track through Newmarket is key....it must be re-doubled, as previous articles in recent issues of RAIL EAST have argued.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### ROCS AND THE DANGERS OF CENTRALISATION

Signalling and control of the network is gradually being transferred to Railway Operating Centres (ROCs). These are probably a good idea but they are very remote from some major network nodes. It is occasionally obvious that decisions are being made that do not reflect the traffic patterns at these centres owing to ignorance of local flows. All operators in these ROCs should be allowed to study and understand the whole network before taking up post in the centres.

### NEEDHAM MARKET

Railfuture will conduct a footfall count at Needham Market in spring 2019 (partly to strengthen the case for disabled-access). To help please contact Peter Wakefield.

### RECEIVING RAIL EAST BY POST OR ELECTRONICALLY?

Most readers receive the quarterly newsletter by post. A small but growing number of members request it by email. If you would prefer it via email please let Peter Wakefield know. Apologies to those who occasionally receive it by post when you said no. Envelope stuffing is sometimes done in hurry and mistakes happen!

### CAMBRIDGE CYCLE POINT

The 3,000-space Cycle Point at Cambridge station is full most days. However, a number of bikes get forgotten about or simply abandoned. These have to be weeded out and the new facility's first such cull is taking place. Suspect bikes are labelled then removed to storage. It's a complicated job that must be completed sensitively. Greater Anglia work with the Cycling Campaign to ensure it is.

### SHELFORD STATION ADOPTER AWARDS

Shelford station is experiencing rapid footfall growth. The station is well served by its local station adopters, Philip and Kathryn Ball. They have won an best personal contribution award for their magnificent display in the waiting room.

### WHITTLESFORD

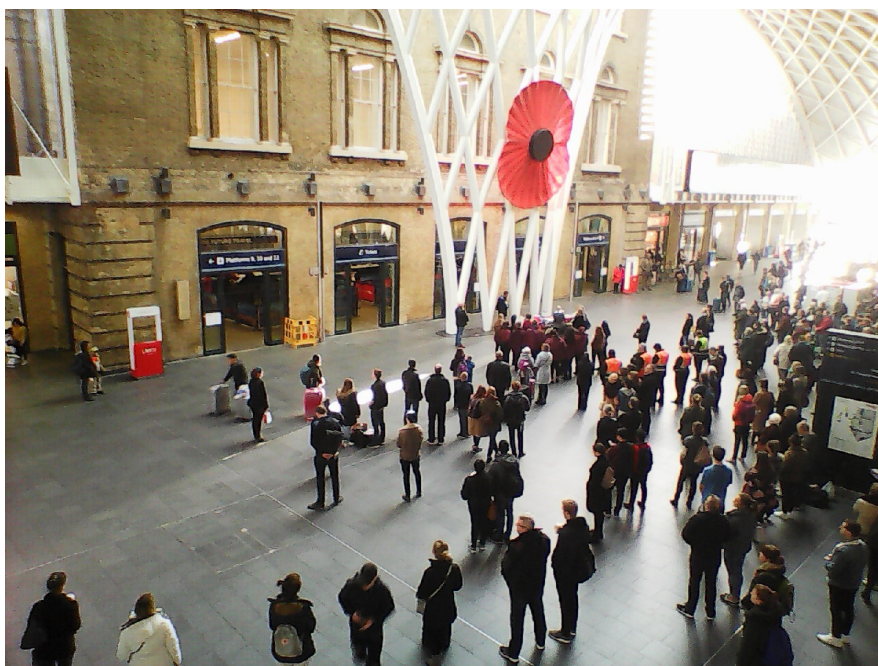
A recommendation from Railfuture's station audit, 200 bike racks are promised and are much needed. The tender for them, we are told, will be issued shortly. A large housing estate has been authorised alongside the Cambridge-bound platform.

## CONTRIBUTIONS FOR RAIL EAST

Please send articles for possible inclusion in RAIL EAST to Peter Feeney, who collates all submissions and prepares them for the newsletter. Good quality photos are appreciated, and really are essential in order to make RAIL EAST visually attractive. No need to crop.

All submissions by **20 January 2019**, please, but articles covering late news will be considered just before sending to the printer two weeks later.

RAIL EAST is formatted by Jerry Alderson.



### REMEMBRANCE DAY - 100 YEARS ON

A photo taken by John Henderson at King's Cross at precisely 11:00 on Sunday 11 November 2018.

# ***railfuture*** East Anglia

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

## **MEETING DATES AND VENUES**

**SATURDAY 1 DEC 2018**

*St Paul's Church Hall  
Hills Road*

**CAMBRIDGE**

CB2 1JP

**SATURDAY 23 FEB 2019**

*Friends Meeting House,  
St John's Street*

**BURY ST EDMUNDS**

IP33 1SJ

**SATURDAY 15 JUN 2019**

*St Mary's at Stoke,  
Church Hall, Stoke Street*

**IPSWICH**

IP2 8DA

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