

raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

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STATIONS SPECIAL



Photo from Network Rail of Soham station under construction six weeks before it is due to open

The long-awaited station at Soham is scheduled to open on Monday 13 December. RAIL EAST looks at what passengers will get for the £18.6m cost

Also inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

- Re-purposing station assets
- South Cambridgeshire village stations see improvements
- Railfuture's response to second Ely Area Consultation
- How the railway serves Ipswich (plus line's 175th anniversary)
- Overcoming HGV driver shortage
- Network Rail guest speaker at Railfuture's Cambridge meeting

TOPICS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE OF RAIL EAST

Chair's thoughts – p.3

Is the government decarbonisation agenda likely to enhance rail investment in a substantial way? And what are we to make of Network Rail's current thinking on the Ely capacity project?

COVER STORY Soham (1) – p.4

A look at the costs of the new station suggests precious few bangs for the taxpayers' bucks

RAILFUTURE MEETING IN CAMBRIDGE ON 4 DECEMBER – p.5

A new venue for us — it's a community centre appropriately called the Signal Box, but don't try going to Network Rail's power signal box at Hills Road bridge!

The Ely Capacity Project – p.6

Railfuture response to the consultation underlines lack of real ambition and a bad dose of short termism on the part of Network Rail (and its paymaster, the DfT)

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The case for using existing heritage to adapt better for the future

Update on the MSF Community Rail Partnership – p.10

Steady progress in upgrading facilities at our western most partnership

COVER STORY Soham (2) – p.12

An early look at the new station – including its impressive fencing!

Focus on Ipswich – p.14

Room for improvement in peak time arrivals and scope for additional services, even if overall pattern serves the Suffolk county town and its catchment well

HGV woes – p.18

Why the driver shortages have arisen, how they make such an impact on the consumer supply chain – and how the ongoing situation strengthens the case for greater investment in rail freight

Yet another big regional anniversary – p.20

Commemorating 175 years of trains between Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds

Summer day trips by rail – the good, the bad & the ugly... – p.21

Mixed fortunes with the various operators perhaps suggest the era of Great British Railways cannot come soon enough

Reader's feedback on the Flexi ticket initiative – p.22

Further reader reflections on the economics of flexi ticketing underline the reality that the entire ticketing system urgently needs a root & branch re-think


"And finally..." – Manea & CIS – p.23

A story from the Fens to keep all advocates for rail motivated – and would you know what TBD meant if you saw it on an information screen?

Climate change and decarbonisation receive a mention this issue, but the articles were written prior to COP26 closing. A 'helpful' summary from a Swedish reporter...



Greta Thunberg  @GretaThunberg

The **#COP26**  is over. Here's a brief summary: Blah, blah, blah.

CHAIR'S THOUGHTS – WHERE ARE THE BIG DECISIONS?

BY NICK DIBBEN, CHAIR, EAST ANGLIA BRANCH

I delayed writing my column for RAIL EAST, because like many people I was hoping that there might be big announcements in either the Budget or surrounding the COP26 conference relating to the railways and future investment. There were, however, no such announcements. Although there is the intent to reach carbon-zero, and we know that, for example, moving freight from road to rail results in significant energy savings, there is no plan to deliver this, so the wait continues. The only announcement that people will remember from the recent Budget is the planned reduced tax on internal flights. Why this is needed is not clear, but it is difficult to justify in the context of the climate emergency.



Railfuture's national chair, Chris Page, will be covering the disappointment in his "Government flunks exam" column (saying "The Government scored an epic fail – we were frustrated but not surprised") in Railwatch 170, published in December 2021 and available online at www.railwatch.org.uk.

Locally one of the big decisions is what to do with the track capacity at Ely, a key junction on the region's rail network. Previous issues of RAIL EAST have set out the Branch view that extra track and a grade-separated junction is needed to cater for the aspirations of both passenger and freight operators. Peter Wakefield covers the latest Network Rail consultation on page 6. The good news is that it does indeed include a viaduct around Ely North Junction. The bad news is that the viaduct is for a new road to reduce traffic at level crossings rather than a railway. Why Network Rail should feel confident to propose a road but not a railway is a question that only it can answer. Is it that different standards apply for road and rail construction?

To help build the case for future rail development, the Branch will be producing a new regional rail strategy next year to coincide with our 50th anniversary. The branch has appointed transport consultant Jonathan Roberts (after evaluating all tenders submitted) to help us provide the evidence to support our proposals. There will be an update on this and other branch campaigns at our Cambridge meeting on **Saturday 4 December from 14.00** (at the **Signal Box Community Centre** — a modern venue, pictured right that's a short walk from Cambridge station, see page 4 for walking directions). Our guest speaker from Network Rail will be talking about the Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) in particular, and I look forward to seeing you there.



If you travel
on our trains
without a
valid ticket...

...we will
prosecute or
fine you!

Intentionally travelling without purchasing a valid ticket can lead to a criminal prosecution.

greateranglia

Finally, it's very pleasing that many people have returned to making trips by train. Once the COVID-19 restrictions ended operators made it clear that ticketless travel would be dealt with strongly — see an example of a Greater Anglia poster, left, which is on display at their stations, along with a similar message on the passenger information systems on its trains.

However, some passengers have reported conductors uninterested in passing through the train checking tickets, others a similar situation at stations with ticket barriers wide open and staff standing nearby chatting. When one passenger offered to show a staff member their ticket, the response was "why?". Is this common, or just an isolated example? Please let us have your experiences and we can take them up with the train operators. Email: nick.dibben@railfuture.org.uk.

SOHAM — HIGH COST FOR BASIC STATION RAISES EYEBROWS

BY JERRY ALDERSON

COVER STORY

Railfuture East Anglia is delighted that Soham is finally re-joining the national rail network on Monday 13 December 2021 (first train calls at 06.49 for Ely; return arrives at 08.31 from Ely). Perhaps not the largest unserved population — Wisbech, possibly followed by Haverhill — but still very welcome, although the promised (and once contractually obligated) hourly service is still some time away.

Soham has gained notoriety among readers of *RAIL* magazine (and perhaps other rail publications) as reflecting much of what is wrong with the railway, owing to the **£18.6m** cost of building the station, given how basic it is. As Victor Meldrew might say, they cannot believe it.

To be clear, few people (and certainly not Railfuture) have a problem with spending that much on a station for a community as large as Soham's, it is merely how little it is buying, and why that is. Had there been a 150-space car park (there's plenty of room for it, currently occupied by the station contractors) with entrances at both ends, a decent canopy on the platform, a large waiting room with heating and air-conditioning, perhaps with a coffee kiosk or small retail outlet, and a second track laid (sufficient in length so that freight trains could pass a stationary train at the station) then there would really be something to show for the money.

Reston station in Scotland on the East Coast Mainline, which is under construction, will cost a fraction more at £20m, but that is buying two very long platforms (270 metres), a fully-accessible footbridge, an access road and a larger car park.

Since 1999 around a hundred stations have opened in Britain (Railfuture's book, *Britain's Growing Railway*, lists all those opened up to 2017) but only four stations in the East of England, of which two are in Railfuture London & South East branch's area (Braintree Freeport and Southend Airport). The last new station built in the Railfuture East Anglia branch area was Cambridge North, in 2017, so let's compare the cost of each against what is being provided.

Cambridge North (CMB) – £55m	Soham (SOJ) – £18.6m
Substantial track remodelling [*1]	No track remodelling
Additional electrification	No electrification
3 x 240m platforms (two through and one bay)	One 99m platform
Short (inadequate) canopies on all platforms plus several four-side shelters	No canopy, just narrow shelters with minimal protection from the weather
Substantial boundary wall behind the 240 metre length of platform 1	Lower wall behind the platform to separate it from vehicle area
Long road to station entrance	Short road to station entrance
450 car parking spaces	50 car parking spaces
1,000 fully covered cycle spaces	Two small partly-covered cycle areas
High-quality covered footbridge with lifts (three) for station users only	Basic footbridge with no cover and no lifts [*2]
TVM x 3	TVM x 2
Substantial station building with staff	No building
Male, female and disabled toilets	No toilets
Coffee outlet and shop (currently unlet)	No retail
Staff facilities	No staff facilities (unstaffed)
Substantial station square	Small station square

[*1] – At Cambridge North new track was required for the bay platform but the major work was to remodel the track to allow freight trains to access the freight terminal. The latter was a substantial part of the total cost.

[*2] – At Soham the footbridge is not 'accessible' as it only provides a public right of way to fields, allowing a foot crossing to be closed. However, it is a distance from the former crossing and a long tarmac walkway has been constructed with palisade fencing erected, not just on the railway side but also next to the fields.

Also worthy of mention is how much land has been taken over by the station contractors at Soham as a worksite – it runs beside around 500 metres of railway line. Compare that to the substantial six-storey Novotel at Cambridge North, which borrowed two small strips: the taxi rank and two rows of the main car park.

Raising concerns about rail costs is entirely legitimate, especially where it appears to be a result of inefficiency rather than quality. There will always be finite funds for rail enhancements and projects require a benefit:cost ratio above 1.0 (actually they need substantially more than this to convince the Treasury) to go ahead. The rail industry must bring costs down – and abolish the compensation culture – if we are to see a 'bigger and better railway' (Railfuture's campaigning slogan).

There are a lot of people banking on Great British Railways, which is intended to provide a 'simpler' railway, but we can't wait for change until GBR is fully in place.

The contractors building Soham station deserve praise for their speed – hopefully it will open just nine months after construction began (with preparatory work starting a few months before that).

RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA MEETING — SAT 4 DECEMBER **SIGNAL BOX COMMUNITY CENTRE, CAMBRIDGE NR2 1EW** **SPEAKER FROM NETWORK RAIL ON ELY AREA ENHANCEMENTS**

The most-important rail upgrade needed in East Anglia is at Ely North Junction (see pages 6-7), as it is a major capacity bottleneck with implications across the region. The Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) scheme is being developed to allow more trains to run. The latest public consultation ends on 28 November 2021, a week before this public meeting.

Matt Brennan (pictured) will be speaking about Network Rail's proposals, including feedback received. It will be an opportunity to ask questions about the scheme, and perhaps influence it!

This is the first meeting with a guest speaker since COVID-19. Starts 14.00. Don't miss it!

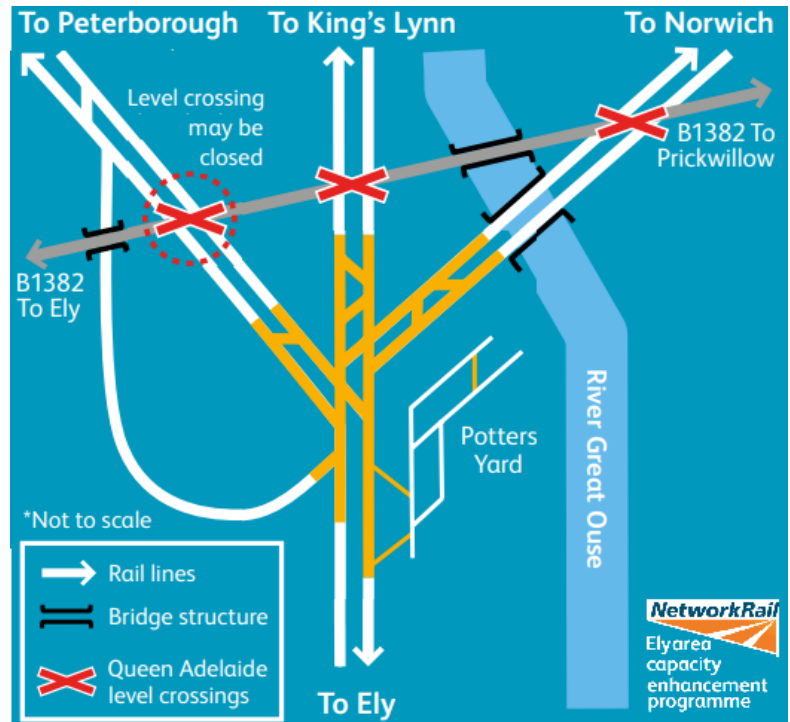


ELY AREA CAPACITY CONSULTATION: RAILFUTURE'S RESPONSE

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

Network Rail (NR) has consulted on its Ely Area Capacity Enhancement (EACE) proposals. The second part (centred on Ely North Junction and upgrade of various level crossings) closes on 28 November 2021 — <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/ely>. Railfuture East Anglia has submitted its response as described below.

The main component of NR's proposal is the restoration of Ely North Junction (where lines from March, King's Lynn and Norwich meet to run jointly through Ely station) back to its historical layout by eradicating the single lead points introduced in April 1992. These effectively gave the latter two lines a shared short single line stretch that makes the proposed timetable of 8 / 10 trains an hour to and from them impossible to operate. This single line section also makes the even more busy March line very difficult to operate.



Network Rail is concerned that the string of level crossings presents a risk and seeks to close the Peterborough-bound one. It proposes a new road link, but some Railfuture members believe a better solution would be to re-route the line north of the King's Lynn level crossing.

In the paper Railfuture has presented to NR we observe: "the railway junction at Ely is now recognised as the East of England's highest transport investment priority for the following reasons.

1. For the major East Anglian settlements of Cambridge, Norwich, Ipswich and Colchester, their only rail route to the north is via Ely.
2. Passenger growth over the last 20 years has driven an increase in demand for the number of services passing through the junction.
3. Future growth both in the size of existing settlements and the planned location of new settlements in the region will see this trend continue,
4. The dramatic growth in trade through the Port of Felixstowe. The pressure to 'decarbonise' this vital link between the southern ports and the main centres of demand in the Midlands, the North and Scotland will accelerate this trend as rail becomes increasingly competitive with road over long distances."

Broad support for a radical solution

We point out that there must be a radical solution, the one which has "has universal backing from the region's commercial and political stakeholders. These include the MPs in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, the County, City, Borough and District Councils across the three counties together with the Cambridge & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (NALEP) and the Sub-National Transport Boards of 'England's Economic Heartland' (EEH) and 'Transport East' (TE) together with passenger and freight train operators and the Port of Felixstowe."

Regional/local needs just as important as national

To develop its proposals NR received from NALEP and CPCA £21.4m, with media reports that up to £500m might be available from the DfT to pay for the works.

Bearing in mind the adage 'he who pays the piper calls the tune', are NR's current solution radical enough to enable the railway to serve both local and broader national needs? We believe that restoration of the junction and the rebuilding of the two 19th-century Cutter and Common Muckhill bridges (that are life expired and have to be replaced anyway) is not radical at all.

The CPCA and NALEP need to keep their growth agenda as sustainable as possible and cater for growth in the future so there must be a radical solution now. We do not want to be campaigning for an upgrade to the junctions in 10 years' time. The Railfuture response therefore takes the form of desired outputs rather than suggested interventions. We made two main points. Firstly, sufficient capacity should allow for **at least 13 Trains Per Hour (TPH) in each direction as listed:**

2 TPH London to King's Lynn

1 TPH Stansted Airport to Norwich

1 TPH Liverpool (currently, but possibly to be cutback to Nottingham) to Norwich (uses north junction twice per direction in order to call at Ely)

1 TPH Oxford to Norwich (following opening of East West Rail)

1 TPH Ipswich to Peterborough

1 TPH Stansted Airport to Birmingham

2 TPH Cambridge to Wisbech (upon re-opening March-Wisbech)

4 TPH Freight including Felixstowe from/to destinations in the Midlands and North

Soham-Ely doubling

Railfuture's second ask is to broaden the scope and include doubling the single line from Ely to Soham, without which the three freight trains and up to two passenger services per hour could not be accommodated. Our proposals for increasing capacity for both passenger and freight services are described in more detail in Railfuture's 2019 publication "From Branch Line to Main Line" - see

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/docs/Railfuture-East-Anglia-20191030-Mid-Anglia-from-branch-to-main-line-proposals.pdf>

Grade separation needed

The above service aspirations require additional capacity beyond that which NR appears to be proposing, so that to avoid performance risk, **a grade-separated solution must be found.** Examples on major freight routes can be found at Reading and more recently at Werrington near Peterborough. Network Rail's forecast to 2043 identifies the need for up to three freight trains an hour. In future these trains are expected to be lengthened from 500m to between 700m and 775m and this, combined with their slower acceleration, means they occupy junctions for longer than passenger trains.

Services, both freight and passenger, that approach Ely from the south east all leave towards the north west so this was the logical selection for grade separation. The track diagrams in the document at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display2729> show the Railfuture proposal in outline.

For rail campaigners it can often feel frustrating that Network Rail is forced by the Treasury/DfT to operate in silos. Cambridge South is being developed as if East West Rail will not happen, and the Ely upgrade takes no account of the firm proposals to reopen the March-Wisbech railway line and provide two direct trains an hour to Cambridge. The photo, right, shows Peter Wakefield and councillors from all parties after accepting the petition to reopen the line in 2013.



RE-PURPOSING STATION ASSETS – MAKING BETTER USE OF THE RAILWAY HERITAGE

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

March was once the major junction of five very busy railway lines. It had a magnificent station to match. Sadly, the number of railways has shrunk to just two links, to Ely and to Peterborough. As a result of this reduced status, the station buildings have been treated with what can only be described as disrespect over many years. A valiant group of local volunteers has worked hard to mitigate the years of neglect and stabilised the situation. All is now changing



as Greater Anglia, with funding from the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), is giving the main building a dramatic makeover. We covered plans for the makeover in RAIL EAST issue 186.

Currently the entire building is being gutted as a prelude to bringing the interior up to what station users have every right to expect. One hopes the building's exterior, including doors and windows, will be restored to as near original

condition as possible. Already the former Area Manager office has been cleared and a new car park will take its place. See photo above (by Peter Wakefield) of signage at station, covering up the works and the graphic of buildings and car park from a CPCA YouTube video (see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jvEpZWizZhk>).

March looks like a very exciting transformational project and is very encouraging. But what of other stations in a dire state? There's no shortage of them, sadly.

RAIL EAST issue 191 briefly referenced the lovely refurbished former station buildings at **Histon**, now standing alongside the Cambridgeshire Busway, the former Wisbech, St Ives and Cambridge Junction Railway. The building was saved from demolition after a public outcry. These buildings are much loved as a part of the local heritage. The Histon building stood empty for much of a 40-year period but the recent repurposing no doubt was made possible by developing the adjacent station master's garden and other former railway land. The photo above (by Peter Wakefield) shows the repurposed Histon buildings...station master's house, the wing behind and above the station offices. Now a café.



But what about the likes of Shepreth, Brandon and Weeley? All of them are in vibrant and fast developing communities.

Shepreth is a lovely building, in a slightly awkward position it is true, but could become the centre piece of a suite of meeting rooms and café with finance provided by adjacent redevelopment.

The Great Northern Train Operating Company (TOC) and Community Rail Partnership (CRP) have created a station of a high standard – see the article on recent improvements on p.10 of this issue – but sadly dominated by the boarded up building (see photos, right, by Peter Wakefield of the building from different angles).

Brandon station is fast becoming a very busy station once again. It serves a large and growing town and catchment. The remaining station building (see photo, below, by Peter Wakefield) is on the downside but is in very poor condition. The Greater Anglia TOC was stopped from demolishing it by local community opposition who got it listed. The TOC had the best of motives as it wanted to provide a much better and, in its terms, affordable station environment. But the building has huge potential as train user and community hub. The TOC is not funded to complete the work – but maybe it could enter into a partnership with the local authority, Network Rail and others (including relevant Community Rail Partnerships) to use some of the adjacent, presumably railway, land “to do a Histon”?



There are many other stations in a similar position. The historical photo (photographer unknown) of Weeley station on the Sunshine Coast Line in Essex illustrates another case.

The train operator recognises the bleak environment these crumbling buildings present to users. But the buildings are an important part of the history of their communities. They are surely too important to be reduced to rubble. They can be successfully repurposed. Surely it is not beyond the wit of us all to put together a grouping as suggested above to do just that, showcasing our railway heritage and above all providing firm foundations for the future railway.



Photo, left, from Wikipedia of the grand station at Bury St Edmunds. A considerable sum has been spent renovating it, but the TOC has still not found any tenants.

Perhaps we will learn in due course whether responsibility for such historical assets will remain with the train operators or will shift to Great British Railways...

UPDATE FROM SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE VILLAGE STATIONS BY SARAH GROVE - CRP PROJECT OFFICER



Despite the fall in ridership at the stations owing to the pandemic, much has been going on at the stations themselves – Foxton, Meldreth and Shepreth – in preparation for the return to rail.

Station improvements

As part of the Passenger Benefit Fund (PBF) there have been many improvements at the Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership's stations, and a boost to long-held aspirations. We're delighted to report that some PBF money was directed towards a feasibility study for a ramp to connect the London-bound platform to the path to Melbourn. We now have detailed drawings and costings and can hopefully press ahead with this project which will improve accessibility at Meldreth station. We're working in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, which will provide the path itself, funded from developer contributions, including from Melbourn Science Park which is keen to promote sustainable travel to work.

At Foxton the waiting shelter on the London platform has been spruced up with new paint and new seating and now boasts a CIS inside to keep waiting passengers abreast of live service information. We have new platform seating too, although sadly still uncovered. Shepreth has a new planter and CIS screen at the front of the station and the waiting shelters on both sides have been lined with habitat photos tying in with the station as destination for Shepreth Wildlife Park. The Parish Council at Shepreth asked the CRP to investigate the provision of an Amazon locker at the station, as Shepreth has no post office or shop, and we were delighted to be able to facilitate this alongside the train operator, GTR. The waiting room at Meldreth has also been painted.

Installation of Defibrillators

As part of a network-wide project, GTR has installed publicly-accessible, life-saving automated external defibrillators (AEDs), pictured below, at 238 stations, including



Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton. At Meldreth (photo, right, by Sarah Grove) and Foxton the defibrillators are on the station platforms, and at Shepreth the defibrillator is at the station entrance next to the ticket machine. The locations of the defibrillators are fed into the 999 network so operators can direct callers to the units in emergencies. All of these station improvements will, we hope, give the village stations a boost in the ratings at the next Railfuture Easy Stations Audit!



Changes to Timetables

Delight at the proposal in the May 2022 timetable consultation of am and pm peak semi-fasts to London and a half-hourly Saturday service soon turned to consternation when the weekday service reduced to hourly after 6 September 2021 owing to driver shortages. Furthermore, the path left for the Barrington quarry landfill train resulted in a two-hour gap in the timetable around mid-day. This caused problems for commuters and students alike. We are pleased to say that

pressure from rail users, the CRP and Railfuture has given us an 11.36 (MEL→CBG), returning as the 12.27 (CBG→MEL), plugging the gap from 11 October. We have hopes of the return of our half-hourly service in December 2021, and of the long campaigned for return of the semi-fast peak services next year.

Foxton Travel Hub Consultation

The latest iteration of the design for the proposed Travel Hub at Foxton (photo from Greater Cambridge Partnership website) was revealed in September (<https://consultcambs.uk/engagement/hq.com/foxton-travel-hub-2021>). The newest version aligns the car parking to a Roman Road found on the site, and includes a footbridge with lifts to cross between the platforms – a long-held CRP aspiration. However, concerns remain about the safety of passengers crossing the busy A10, and on the platforms, which are not quite up to specification for the level of footfall that would be generated by the Travel Hub. (Editor: on 15 November the Cambridge Independent reported that the car and cycle parking would be scaled back.)



The Greater Cambridge website promotes the hub as follows:

A Travel Hub at Foxton station would increase the number of people who can access the rail network into Cambridge. The Travel Hub would provide up to 500 car parking spaces with easy access to the station, allowing people to use public transport to complete their journey into Cambridge rather than drive all the way – reducing congestion and pollution on the route into Cambridge.



It is expected to be used mainly by people from the A10 corridor between Cambridge and Royston, and will provide a rail connection to Cambridge and Cambridge North stations, which serve large employment areas, and potential future connections to the proposed Cambridge South station, which would serve the Cambridge Biomedical Campus.

In an interesting twist the barn building close to the station has been discovered to be one of the earliest examples of concrete construction in the UK and has become a listed building. The CRP is hoping that the barn will be made safe and watertight and eventually become available for community use. The MSFCRP response to the consultation can be found here (<https://meldrethsheprethfoxtonrail.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/MSFCRP-Foxton-Travel-Hub-Response-Sept-2021.pdf>)

Next Rail User Group Meeting

The next meeting of the MSFRUG will be on 30 November, 19.30 – this will be a virtual meeting and all are welcome. We hope to have representatives from both GTR and Network Rail available to answer questions. If you would like to be included in the invitation to the meeting, please email railusergroup@gmail.com.

For more information on the Meldreth, Shepreth and Foxton Community Rail Partnership please visit our website <https://meldrethsheprethfoxtonrail.org.uk/>, or Facebook Group (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/meldrethsheprethfoxtonrail>).

MARCH AND MANEA STATIONS VIEWED FROM A DRONE

As mentioned on page 8, the Combined Authority has uploaded a YouTube video of drone pictures. Below are some images of March and also Manea's new car park.



SOHAM STATION — CONSTRUCTION

PHOTOS AND TEXT BY JERRY ALDERSON

COVER STORY

Soham station closed in September 1965. It might have closed on 2 July 1944 after it was destroyed when a munitions train carrying high explosive bombs caught fire and blew up, killing the fireman and signaller and damaging over seven hundred buildings. Works to repair the line were undertaken immediately and although the station buildings were never rebuilt, the platform was.

In February 2011 East Cambridgeshire District Council obtained funding for a study into a possible reopening. Enabling works for the new station by Network Rail started in autumn 2020, and main construction started in March 2021. It is not possible to access the station area prior to opening, but it can be viewed close-up from the neighbouring fields, and from a distance at the foot crossing to the west.

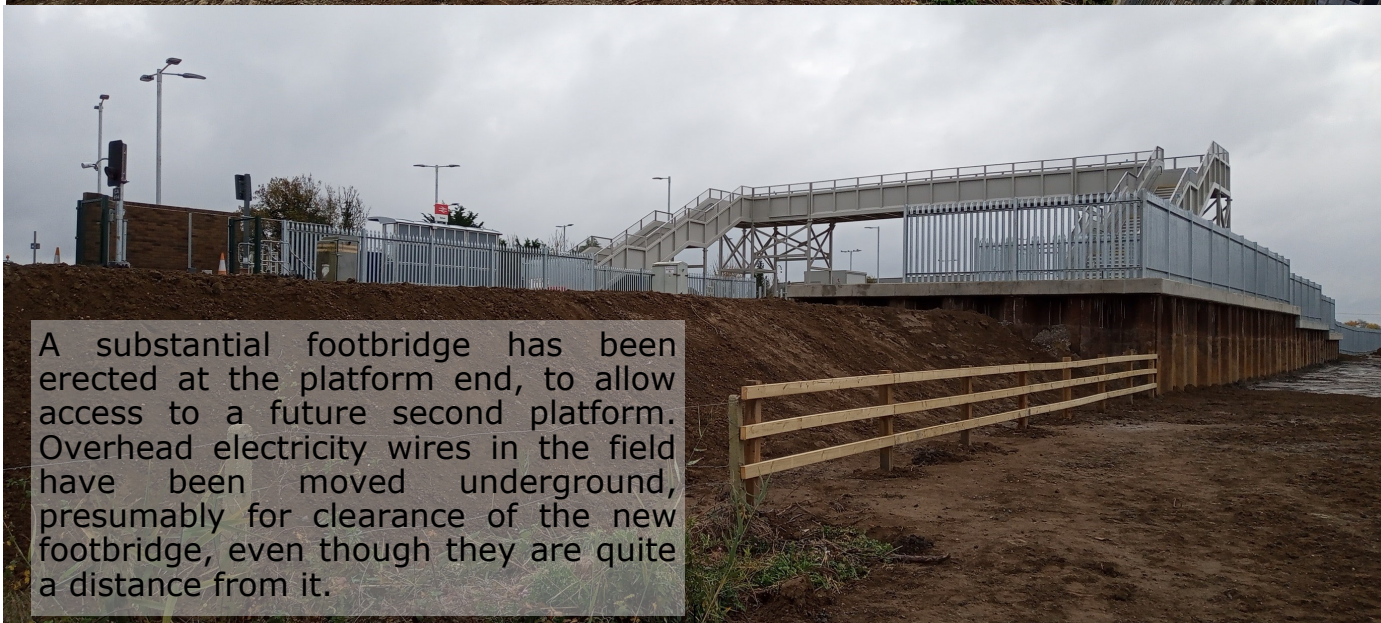
The platform and footbridge appear to be complete, with shelters, lighting and signage in place. However, the car park, turning circle and road leading to it are not.



The former foot crossing, as part of a public right of way across fields, has now been closed to the public—protected by palisade fencing and a locked gate for access by Network Rail.



A substantial footbridge has been erected at the platform end, to allow access to a future second platform. Overhead electricity wires in the field have been moved underground, presumably for clearance of the new footbridge, even though they are quite a distance from it.



A long tarmac walkway has been constructed to the countryside public right of way. Whilst palisade fencing on the railway side is understandable, it's unclear why it is needed to protect the field, especially as wooden and wire fencing is used opposite the platform.



THE RAILWAY AND IPSWICH

BY PETER WAKEFIELD AND PHIL SMART

In recent issues of RAIL EAST we have looked at how the railway serves our five principal regional towns and cities...and offered some suggestions as to how services could be adapted to better serve people living, working and visiting there.

As context, the table below shows the five regional hubs and their catchment populations, together with 2019 station footfall information from the annual ORR statistics:

Hub	Population (thousands) and footfall (millions)	
Cambridge	170	12.7 "Central" + North stations
Colchester	132	5.4 North + Town + Hythe stations
Ipswich	140	3.5 Main + Derby Road stations
Norwich	186	4.3
Peterborough	202	5.0

Ipswich is the last of our towns to be studied and it too is of ancient foundation. It claims to be the oldest English, as opposed to Roman, town in Britain and with the longest continuous habitation (Colchester was abandoned at the end of the Roman occupation).

Its geography is not in doubt, however, as it is situated close to the sea around the first upstream bridge point of the River Orwell. The Orwell is the broad estuary of the River Gipping, stretching away 10 miles southeast to the sea at Felixstowe's Landguard Point. The headwaters of the Gipping/Orwell are about 21 miles north of Ipswich near the hamlet of Mendlesham Green. As the Gipping, it flows southwest from there through settlements such as Gipping, then south and southeast past Stowmarket, Needham Market, Bramford and much of Ipswich. The name change comes at Ipswich's Stoke Bridge, the inland tidal limit. During the late eighteenth century the Gipping was canalised when it was known as the Stowmarket Navigation. Nowadays railway travellers are familiar with this broad shallow valley as their fast trains swoop down between Haughley Junction and Ipswich station.



River Orwell from the air (BBC website)

As in most places the railway came to Ipswich piecemeal. The first section of what is now the Great Eastern mainline arrived from London via Colchester in 1846 with the opening of a station at a site just south of a tunnel, called Ipswich Stoke Hill. A second railway opened later in 1846, with the Ipswich - Bury St Edmunds railway operating from near the original station through the tunnel and past the current station site up the Gipping Valley to Bury. Later lines connected to this railway at Haughley giving connections to south Norfolk and Norwich (1847-49) and just north of Ipswich to Great Yarmouth/Lowestoft via East Suffolk in stages during 1851-59.

But long before the arrival of the railway Ipswich was a thriving port serving its Suffolk agricultural hinterland. During the 19th century the railway enabled the development of this agricultural trade with large maltings and agricultural machinery manufacture becoming very important functions. Ransome & Rapier's products became world famous, not least for their railway cranes, turntables and hydraulic buffer stops still used to this day in large railway termini. During the 20th century insurance companies became large employers. All through this time the town became its region's main shopping, business and night economy centre, something the railway passenger services encouraged and continue to support.

The current Ipswich railway station opened in 1860 and has recently been carefully upgraded by Greater Anglia. It is used by six service groups as shown below:

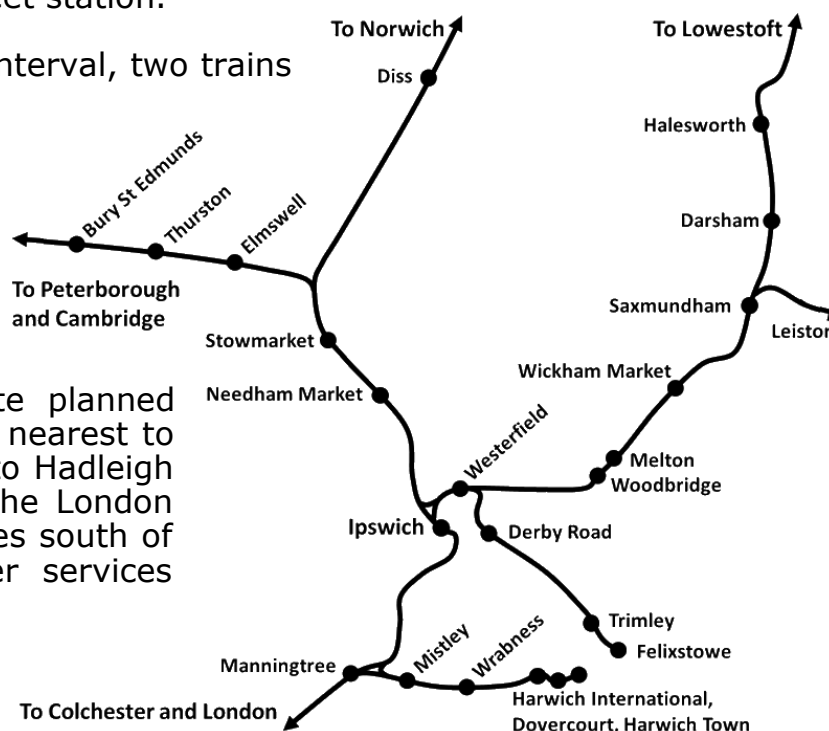
1a.	1 tph semi fast to Manningtree - Colchester - Chelmsford - Stratford - London.
1b.	1 tph to Diss and Norwich. 46 miles in 32 - 43 minutes.
Both the above services operate with additional peak trains.	
2.	1tph Ipswich - Manningtree - Colchester - Marks Tey - Kelvedon - Hatfield Peverel - Chelmsford - Shenfield -Stratford - London. This service group ensures all intermediate settlements have good travel work services for Ipswich. Average journey time is 86 minutes.
3.	1 tph Ipswich - Westerfield - Derby Road - Trimley - Felixstowe. 15.5 miles in 26 minutes.
4.	1 tph Woodbridge - Melton - Wickham Market - Saxmundham - Darsham - Brampton - Halesworth - Beccles - Lowestoft 49 miles in 86-90 minutes.
5.	1 tph Needham Market - Stowmarket - Elmswell - Thurston - Bury St Edmunds - Kennett - Newmarket - Dullingham - Cambridge. 55.5 miles in 81 - 82 minutes.
6.	0.5 tph Ipswich -Stowmarket - Bury St Edmunds - Soham - Ely - Manea - March - Whittlesey - Peterborough. 85 miles in 99 - 102 minutes. One evening train (Ipswich - Peterborough) calls at three additional stations and takes longer.

- This sixth service will operate hourly when the track layout at Ely is upgraded.
- All routes have reasonable services.
- Times and distances are all between Ipswich and end destination.
- London refers to Liverpool Street station.

In addition to the above regular interval, two trains per day run directly to Harwich from London, one morning and one evening, to connect with ferry services at Harwich International (formerly known as Parkeston Quay).

So, Ipswich has a reasonable number of links – though oddly there has never been any route planned directly west from the town. The nearest to that was the 7.5 miles long line to Hadleigh from a triangular junction with the London line close to Bentley, some 5 miles south of Ipswich. The branch's passenger services were withdrawn in 1932.

The map shows the current network centred on Ipswich.



Some stations have closed ...Orwell, Bealings, Claydon, Bramford and Bentley, as have the aforementioned station at Hadleigh and the intermediate branch stations at Capel and Raydon, but generally the original network has survived in good order. The service level on all routes is the best ever and certainly overall journey times are also the best ever, underpinned by the high quality of the recently introduced Stadler and Bombardier intercity, regional and commuter fleets.

The current timetable is to a large extent based on the need to serve London's economy, but there is evidence of a move of businesses to major regional towns such as Ipswich and the other large East Anglian towns. To better serve those who

travel to Ipswich to enable its economy to function, peak arrival times must be convenient to get from the station to the workplace or school/college. Many start times are flexible, but most are still based around the hour or 30 minutes past the hour. So, train times need to arrive about 20/25 minutes before those start times. Below we have listed trains arriving Monday - Friday between about 07.00 and 09.00. As you will see the range of towns and villages with direct services into Ipswich is impressive. Services from stations London to Norwich have a good arrival range based on the good frequency provided.

Arrival times from the Lowestoft line are adequate but Felixstowe line station timings are poor. However, we suggest that real improvements are needed along the East Suffolk Line – especially the need to improve end to end journey times and frequencies at the south end of the route. The construction of Sizewell C Nuclear Power Station should be the catalyst to demand capacity improvements for the line, such as re-doubling it between Saxmundham and Woodbridge, together with restoring services to Leiston. This would enable a faster limited stop Lowestoft service to operate each hour plus an hourly all stations service from Leiston to Ipswich...2tph south of Saxmundham. Felixstowe line services will remain difficult to change/improve until most of the line is doubled, given the scale of freight movements to and from the port.

Services from Cambridge, Newmarket, Bury St Edmunds and all stations save Stowmarket also have poor arrival times. There is strong housing growth along the Bury line and an "all stations" service to arrive in Ipswich at about 07.30 and 08.30 is essential. In the meantime, the 07.16 arrival from Stowmarket should be timetabled to call at Needham Market using (Automatic) Selective Door Opening on the new trains. The current xx.01 arrival in Ipswich is about as inconvenient for most potential users going to work or school as can be.

Given the huge growth in Cambridge area population a carefully designed two-tier fast / stopping service will be needed in the near future to bring service convenience up to the good standard enjoyed between Ipswich and Norwich. We note the poor provision of local stations between Stowmarket and Diss/Norwich and we fully endorse calls for an additional station at Long Stratton/Fornsett to cater for significant levels of housing development in south Norfolk.

At the moment station intervals are good, though we think use of Westerfield could be better developed – especially if it is moved to a site to the west of Westerfield Road. This would better serve the proposed Ipswich Garden Suburb development of up to 3,500 new homes situated to the north of the railway. Located to the west of the crossover, it would improve the capacity of the Felixstowe branch junction by permitting trains to Felixstowe to call at the 'down' platform instead of blocking the 'up' line as at present.

Needham Market should have a 30-minute-interval service all day and could be developed as a north Ipswich station serving the large nearby housing developments. One of the two Norwich trains, the semi-fast, could stop there throughout the day to encourage less rail heading and general modal shift. Increasing the number of trains serving Needham also requires greater urgency in resolving the station's currently poor passenger access arrangements – we hope that the award of DfT funding in 2020 will help address this issue. Services between Bury, Thurston and Elmswell need peak frequency development to match housing plans for that part of Suffolk. The better frequency planned for the Peterborough service group could be of use here.

Right along the so-called A14 corridor between Ipswich and Bury, current already high levels of house building are likely to be significantly increased if the Babergh Mid-Suffolk Joint Local Plan receives government approval; future housing allocations of a minimum 6,000 new dwellings for Stowmarket, Needham and the "core villages" on or near to the Mid-Anglia route, from Claydon and Bramford in the east to Thurston in the west, surely suggest a strategic need to invest further

resource in rail infrastructure and services to encourage modal shift from the already sclerotic A14.

Current Peak Arrivals

Trains arrive at Ipswich as the following times during the morning peak ... bear in mind that even in these days of flexible working many people start work on the hour or 30 minutes past it. Schools still start at between 08.45 and 09.00. Times are from the December 2021 revised timetable.

06.52	Lowestoft, Beccles, Brampton, Halesworth, Darsham, Saxmundham, Wickham Mk, Melton, Woodbridge.
07.01	Bury St Edmunds, Thurston, Elmswell, Stowmarket, Needham Market.
07.02	Trimley, Derby Road, Westerfield.
07.08	Norwich, Diss, Stowmarket.
07.09	London, Chelmsford, Colchester, Manningtree.
07.16	Stowmarket.
07.29	Colchester, Manningtree.
07.31	Norwich, Diss, Stowmarket
07.38	London, Stratford, Chelmsford, Witham, Colchester, Manningtree.
07.43	Lowestoft, Beccles, Brampton, Halesworth, Darsham, Saxmundham, Wickham Market, Melton, Woodbridge, Westerfield
07.47	Norwich, Diss, Stowmarket.
08.01	Cambridge, Dullingham, Newmarket, Bury, Thurston, Elmswell, Stowmarket, Needham Market.
08.08	Lowestoft, Beccles, Halesworth, Darsham, Saxmundham, Wickham Market, Melton, Woodbridge, Westerfield.
08.09	London, Shenfield, Colchester, Manningtree.
08.11	Norwich, Diss, Stowmarket.
08.15	Harwich International, Wrabness, Mistley.
08.18	Felixstowe, Trimley, Derby Road, Westerfield.
08.30	London, Stratford, Romford, Shenfield, Chelmsford, Witham, Kelvedon, Marks Tey, Colchester, Manningtree.
08.32	Norwich.
08.42	London, Stratford, Chelmsford, Colchester, Manningtree.
08.43	Norwich, Diss, Stowmarket.
08.56	Lowestoft, Beccles, Halesworth, Darsham, Saxmundham, Wickham Market, Melton, Woodbridge, Westerfield.
09.03	Cambridge, Dullingham, Newmarket, Bury, Thurston, Elmswell, Stowmarket, Needham Market
08.11	Norwich, Diss, Stowmarket.
08.15	Harwich International, Wrabness, Mistley.
08.18	Felixstowe, Trimley, Derby Road, Westerfield.
08.30	London, Stratford, Romford, Shenfield, Chelmsford, Witham, Kelvedon, Marks Tey, Colchester, Manningtree.
08.32	Norwich.
08.42	London, Stratford, Chelmsford, Colchester, Manningtree.
08.43	Norwich, Diss, Stowmarket.
08.56	Lowestoft, Beccles, Halesworth, Darsham, Saxmundham, Wickham Market, Melton, Woodbridge, Westerfield.
09.03	Cambridge, Dullingham, Newmarket, Bury, Thurston, Elmswell, Stowmarket, Needham Market

Actions needed:

1. Suffolk County Council and Transport East to press for the changes needed – particularly the infrastructure improvements between Saxmundham and Woodbridge. EDF is seeking to spend billions of pounds on Sizewell C. The legacy for the long period of disruption should be a high-quality railway that over many years will help decarbonise that part of Suffolk. The emphasis must be on the railway rather than other modes. A new station at the end of the fully restored short branch line should be built at Leiston, served by an hourly service from Ipswich.
2. Ipswich station is constrained, so the site of the freight locomotive servicing depot by the station must be safeguarded for additional platforms that undoubtedly will be required in the future. (The locomotive servicing depot is moving to a more spacious site by the freight train yards.) These will be needed to accommodate additional direct services to Oxford via Cambridge once East West Rail is up and running, as well as increased frequency to Peterborough and on the East Suffolk line as already described elsewhere.
3. The priority of the need to serve London's economy is referenced above but it is a vital part of East Anglia's too, so will always be important. However, it is clear that our regional centres will be increasingly important – so the railway will be even more important to them too. The train operating company (TOC) must focus more on serving East Anglia's economy, making deliberate adjustments to the timetable to do so rather than almost 'accidentally' doing so as now.
4. The other priority affecting Ipswich is the ever-increasing pressure to serve the nation's freight requirements, further development of which is required to meet the demands of a 'decarbonised' economy. This, together with improved passenger services, particularly east and west of Ipswich, cannot happen until sections of single line are doubled beyond Soham, Newmarket and Woodbridge.
5. The district councils and TOC must pursue active travel planning to link stations to new developments and where possible to existing residential development. Some stations such as Needham Market, Westerfield and Elmswell should be developed to play a much greater role in local transport.



Repurposing redundant assets...leisure and housing...Ipswich Docks.

(Photo Phil Smart)

WHERE HAVE ALL THE LORRIES GONE?

BY PHIL SMART

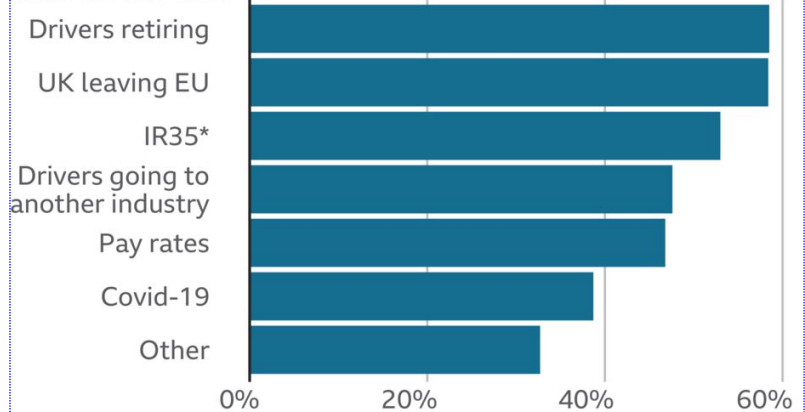
There is much speculation as to what the 'new normal' might look like after COVID-19. The one constant, however, is that we will still need feeding and watering, housing, educating, entertaining, clothing, treating when we get ill and consuming everyday products. All these require reliable supply chains of food, drink, building materials, clothes, shoes, medicines, and other items. Yet, long after pandemic panic buying has ceased, gaps are once again appearing on supermarket shelves, and this is blamed on a shortage of lorry drivers.



The driver shortage is not an easy fix and trouble has been brewing for a long time. Lorry driving is no longer the glamorous occupation it once was, as margins have been squeezed. Fewer youngsters are joining the industry and the so-called 'tramp' turns of duty, where a driver can be away from their family for a week or more, represent a real turn-off for potential new recruits. The average age of drivers is increasing as the industry has struggled to replace its workforce as they retire. It is true that the pandemic has not helped with the training of what new recruits there are, with long waiting lists for tests, but industry sources predict that even an accelerated training programme will be insufficient to manage a crisis that looks set to continue for several years.

Hauliers' reasons for driver shortage

Percentage selecting each reason in survey, multiple answers allowed



*Recent changes have been made to off-payroll working rules, known as IR35

Source: Road Haulage Association survey, 615 responses

BBC

Various sticking plasters have covered this shortage in the past. The recession that followed the 2008 financial crash offered some respite by slowing demand in the economy. As things picked up again, so EU free movement laws allowed drivers to be recruited from elsewhere in Europe. Now that the UK has left the single market, this supply has dried up. A perfectly foreseeable consequence of 'Brexit', which nothing was done to address (and new restrictions such as cabotage have hit).

Not surprisingly, rail freight operators are receiving fresh enquiries from potential consignees, anxious to secure new ways of fulfilling customer demand. New flows are coming to rail, and this will continue, as pressure builds to find zero-carbon supply chain solutions. However, we need to increase capacity on the rail network to keep pace with this new demand. More lines need to be electrified – notably the Felixstowe to the Midlands and North (F2MN) line, but as we run more freight trains (some up to 2,000t), so we need a matching increase in power supply. And as freight shares the railway with passenger services, so we need more passing places, long enough for the faster passenger train to overtake, without stopping the freight train in a siding.



Photo from RFG News September 2021 issue

We also need to provide and upgrade diversionary routes such as the planned East West Main Line connecting East Anglia with the West Coast Main Line at Bletchley. If an unforeseen incident or maintenance work results in the closure of the F2MN route for a week or more, we cannot ask a ship to wait in a port, or for someone to manage without urgent medical supplies. As supply chains become more rail dependent, we will no longer have the option of sending by road. As one operator put it recently, "where am I going to put my hands on a thousand lorries and drivers in future? I can't put my hands on ten, today!"

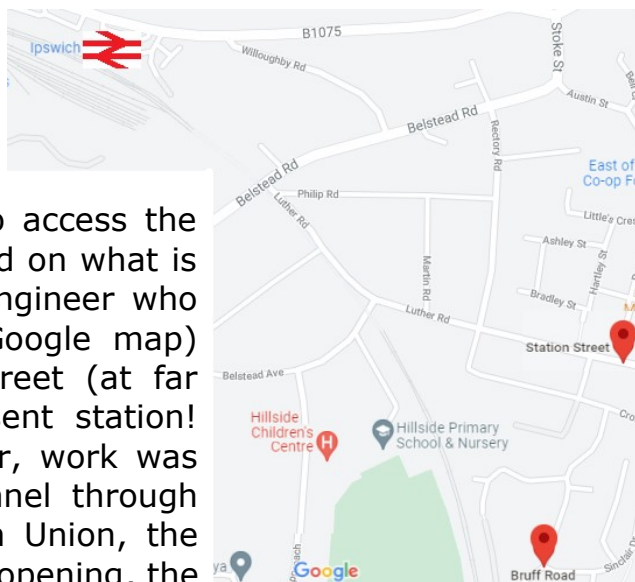
NB This article has been adapted for RAIL EAST from a similar article that appeared in the Scotsman on behalf of the Rail Freight Group, for whom the author is Assistant Policy Manager.

175TH ANNIVERSARY OF IPSWICH AND BURY RAILWAY

BY PHIL SMART

In RAIL EAST issue 191 Peter Feeney reported on the special commemorative steam train that marked the 175th anniversary of the opening Eastern Union Railway between Ipswich and Colchester (see also RAIL EAST issue 190). This recalled memories of the events put on to mark the 150th anniversary in 1996, when steam-hauled specials ran between Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds.

The line between Ipswich and Bury itself was not opened until Christmas Eve 1846 and its 175th birthday therefore falls in December this year. The first services did not run between the stations we see today. Until 1860, trains from Bury St. Edmunds had to access the original station in Ipswich, which was situated on what is now Bruff Road (named in honour of the engineer who built the line, in bottom right corner of Google map) further south and explains why Station Street (at far right of map) is some way from the present station! Before the opening of the line to Colchester, work was already well underway to excavate the tunnel through Belstead Hill by a subsidiary of the Eastern Union, the Ipswich and Bury Railway. At the time of the opening, the station at Bury was incomplete, so a temporary structure was put in place to the east of Fornham Road bridge which remained in use until the present station was opened in November 1847.



The history of Bury St Edmunds station (see photo of building on page 9) can be discerned in some of its features we see today. It was originally built as a terminus, which perhaps explains why the western end is adorned with two towers while the eastern end is quite plain. Unlike most terminus stations however, it did not have a back 'wall' with buffer stops and this was for two reasons. Firstly, the company always envisaged that the line would eventually be extended towards Newmarket and therefore left the space clear for this purpose and secondly, a turntable was installed to allow locomotives arriving from Ipswich to be turned ready for the return journey. This also explains why the two platforms are so far apart, as they originally left room for the 'run round' loops so the locomotive could be attached to the front of the returning train. In later years this space was used for the goods lines that ran through Bury avoiding the passenger platforms, a feature that Railfuture wishes to see reinstated to cater for the increasing volume of freight trains between Felixstowe and the Midlands and North!

Today's observers may wonder why the platform on the north side is much longer than that on the south. The reason is quite simple. At the eastern end the lines converged from four tracks to two to cross Fornham Road bridge. The north side platform is used by eastbound trains and the south, the westbound ones. In steam days therefore, the north platform needed to be long enough to accommodate the locomotive as well as the train, whereas the south platform only had to accommodate the train carriages.

NB. Interested readers are encouraged to seek out a copy of 'East Anglia's First Railways' by the late Hugh Moffat. ISBN 0-86138-038-X.

SADLY SUMMER AND ITS HOLIDAY TRIPS ARE OVER, BUT SOME MEMORIES REMAIN

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

It was great when “the London” grandchildren came to stay. Both are very interested in space, so where better to go for an afternoon than Peterborough Cathedral’s Moon Walk exhibition. They, being new Londoners, are very much used to buses and trains for all trips and as we long ago gave up the car to walk, bike, “train and bus”, the obvious way to go was to “take the train” – especially as there is a good through service every hour on the hour from Cambridge to Peterborough in just about 50 minutes for the 45 miles via Ely.



So to Cambridge station on time for the 11.00, operated by Cross Country (XC). The ever helpful ticket window staff served up the requested two adults with Senior railcards day return and two children’s fares ...for £46.80 please?

About to pay and memory cuts in...

Question: “Does the flat fare £2.00 child return apply?”

“No, because it’s Cross Country. But if you go on the 12.05 Great Northern to Ely or the following 12.20 Greater Anglia (GA) to Ely and take the first East Midlands Railway (EMR) to Peterborough, the children do go for £2.00 return, flat fare total of £4.00 plus £26.60 = £30.60 please.” (The flat fare of £2.00 is only applied at the ticket office, not online. No comment!)

Not surprisingly we saved £16.20 by changing at Ely and avoided travelling by the only direct train between these two large cities. But what a palaver. I do sometimes wonder whether Cross Country Trains is really interested in growing passenger numbers. It’s not even possible to use Group Save on its trains.

We had time for an ice cream break at the café on Ely station. I was by this time having some doubts about my money saving effort and they were realised when the EMR train turned up at Ely on time from Norwich but “full and standing”, being of course a train connecting all the Norfolk and many of the Suffolk tourist resorts to the north of England at a time when nobody sensible could go to the Mediterranean. EMR saw fit to supply an ancient two-car Class 156 in the same interior design GA applied to it when in its ownership for its thousands of short journeys across East Anglia over many years. Now, it was expected to make for Liverpool, by way of Nottingham, Chesterfield, Sheffield, Stockport, Manchester, Warrington and their millions of people.



All the retail outlets at Ely station are independent - quite a rarity!

Social distancing anyone? Stress! I couldn’t help wondering if some of our TOC managements are up to the job.

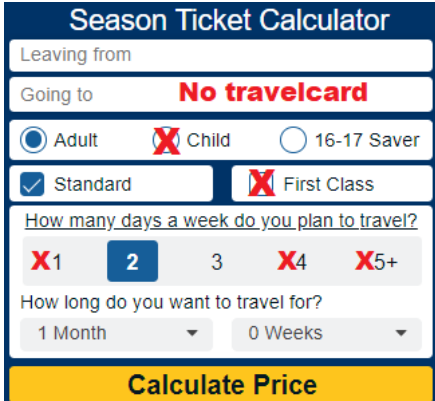
The Moon Walk exhibition was great and so was our return. A lovely new GA train to Ely and a five-minute connection at Ely onto a lovely Great Northern eight-car electric train for Cambridge – ignoring the passing of XC trains in both directions. We went to explore the ancestral homeland of King's Lynn the next day. A lovely trip from Cambridge by GN eight-car electric trains for about the same distance as Peterborough. The return fare for the four of us was £15.00! Yes...just £15.00! And no stress because social distancing was entirely possible.

Why is Cross Country allowed to charge triple the fare for the same distance? No early trains, no late trains provided. And if EMR has cut its service to every two hours, why are its trains still two carriages instead of four? Where are the missing carriages? Presumably sitting idle in a depot? Pandemic?

RAIL EAST FEEDBACK—FLEXI-SEASONS

RAIL EAST is sent to hundreds of stakeholders, along with the rail industry. It is pleasing that so many people are forwarding issues to their colleagues, who have then asked to be added to the mailing list. We're happy to do so (please forward requests to Peter Wakefield). Railfuture members in other branches can also be sent it by email.

RAIL EAST 191 had a five-page analysis of the value of the new flexi-season tickets. A reader wrote "Flexi-seasons were introduced because the price of the season ticket did not make sense for part-time workers. Surely the price of the flexi should have been based on the weekly seasons not the Anytime Day Return, such as 50% of the weekly season for two days, 70% for three and 90% for four days. Each would be a guaranteed saving with no-one needing to use a calculator on the TOC's website (see image, right)."

A screenshot of a 'Season Ticket Calculator' web form. The form has a blue header with the title 'Season Ticket Calculator'. Below the header, there are several input fields and options. 'Leaving from' is a text box. 'Going to' is a dropdown menu with 'No travelcard' selected. There are three radio buttons for 'Adult', 'Child', and '16-17 Saver', with 'Adult' selected. There are two checkboxes for 'Standard' and 'First Class', with 'Standard' checked. Below these is a question 'How many days a week do you plan to travel?' with options 'X1', '2', '3', 'X4', and 'X5+', where '2' is selected. Another question 'How long do you want to travel for?' has two dropdown menus with '1 Month' and '0 Weeks' selected. At the bottom is a yellow button labeled 'Calculate Price'.

Paul Hollinghurst, who co-wrote the article responds, "the suggestion is straightforward (although there would be four purchases a month rather than one) but is far in excess of what the Treasury has accepted in the existing scheme. Many season tickets already offer substantial discounts to the 'anytime' fare so giving a 50% discount for two days would undermine Anytime Day Returns. For example, a weekly season ticket from Norwich to London is £222.10, so a 50% discount would give £111.05 for two days of travel which is cheaper than the Anytime Day Return of £119.20."

Paul agrees that the flexi-season is a stop-gap sticking plaster, saying "The fares system is full of inconsistencies, and it is difficult to insert a new fare product into this system without creating a new layer of inconsistencies. What is needed is overall fares reform layered with a loyalty-based discount for regular travellers to replace the current system of seasons and flexi-seasons."

The Fen Line Users Association's November 2021 newsletter reported "Passenger numbers here are starting to pick up again on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays suggesting that many former daily commuters are now working from home two days a week and combining those days with a long weekend."

Jerry Alderson adds: train operators throughout Britain are reporting highest weekday loadings on Tuesday-Thursday. Smoothing the peaks throughout the day will improve railway economics but creating spikes mid-week will not. It is possible that differential pricing will be introduced in the future e.g. so that Monday is cheaper than Tuesday. Perhaps the flexi-seasons will evolve into being a discount-based system, being cheaper for lightly-used trains.

MANEA STATION CAR PARK UNDER CONSTRUCTION TRANSFORMATION OF FORMER REQUEST-STOP-ONLY STATION

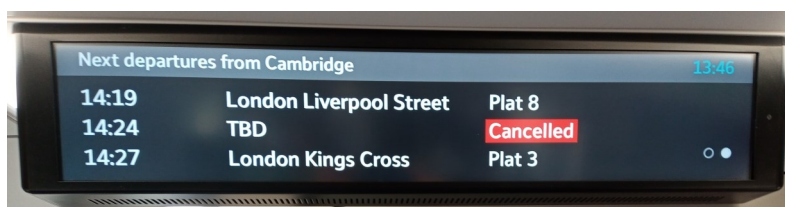
A turf-cutting ceremony on the site of the new 100-space car park at Manea station took place on 21 September 2021 (see photo right). This is significant for all rail supporters since it shows just how much a station can be transformed if it is given a chance. Manea now has a train every two hours (will become hourly, eventually), but only a few years ago it was just a request stop with just two trains calling per day.



INFORMATION SCREENS CONFUSE PASSENGERS

Customer information systems (CIS) at stations and passenger information systems (PIS) on board trains are accurate and helpful most of the time, perhaps almost all of the time, but not 100% of the time, as photos in RAIL EAST issues 190 and 191 showed.

The head-scratching photo this issue appears to show that a train has been cancelled, but which one is 'to be determined'.



Actually, it had been determined, and it was the one destined for Three Bridges station, which has the code TBD. But how many passengers would know that?

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 or graphics are appreciated, and really are essential in order to make RAIL EAST visually attractive.

All submissions by **22 January 2022**, please, but articles covering late news will be considered just before sending to the printer two weeks later.

RAIL EAST is formatted by Jerry Alderson.

RECEIVING RAIL EAST BY POST OR ELECTRONICALLY?

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

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

The latest RAIL EAST is always at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/rail-east/> and a list of recent issues are at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/east/rail-east/covers/>.

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

railfuture East Anglia

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

MEETING DATES AND VENUES

SATURDAY 4 DEC 2021

Signal Box Comm. Centre
Glenalmond Avenue

CAMBRIDGE

CB2 8DB

SATURDAY 26 FEB 2022

Friends Meeting House
St John's Street

BURY ST EDMUNDS

IP33 1SJ

SATURDAY 25 JUNE 2022

St Mary's at Stoke
Stoke Street

IPSWICH

IP2 8BX

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