

# raileast

Newsletter of East Anglia Branch of Railfuture

Issue 201 • Feb 2024

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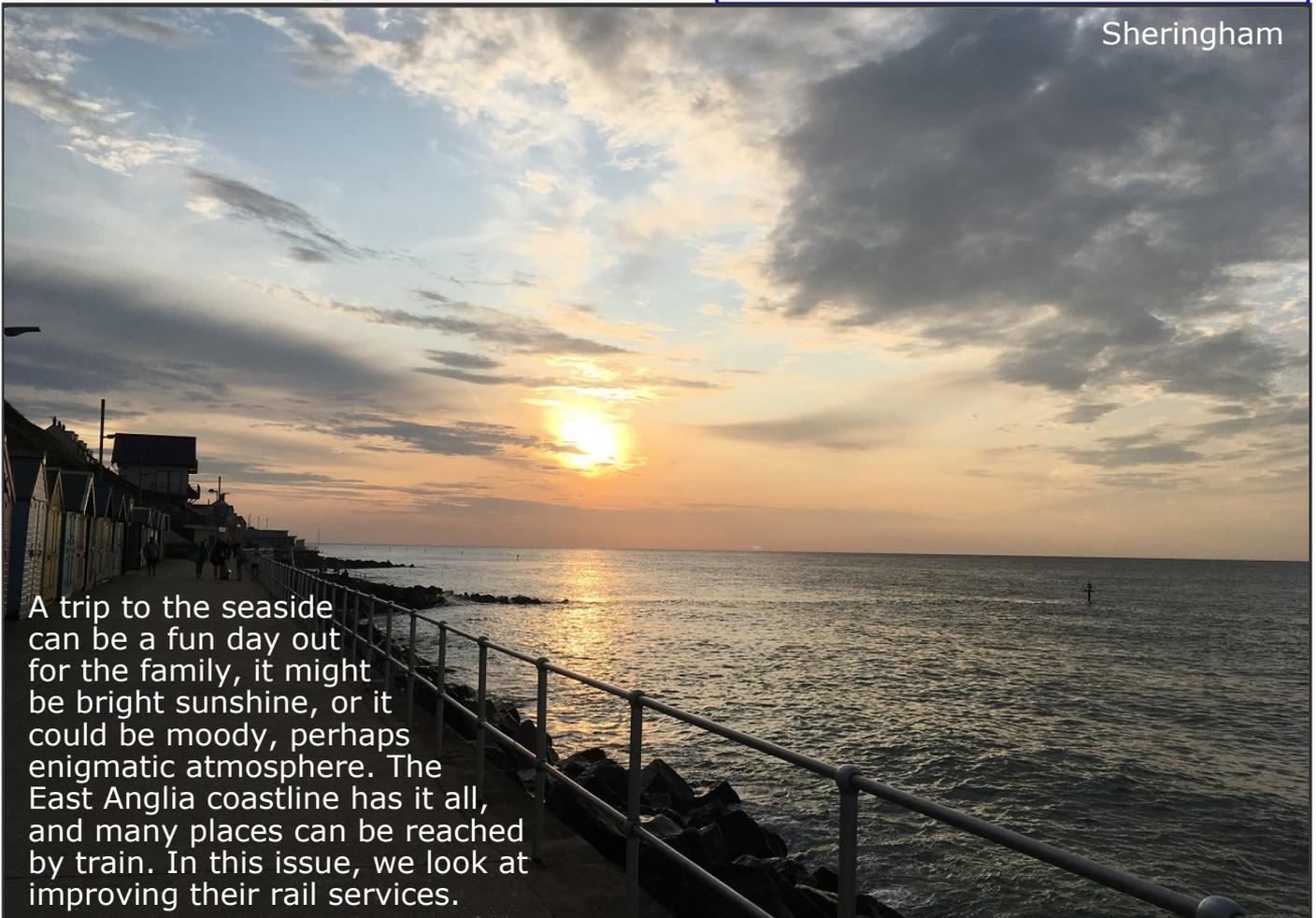
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Sheringham



A trip to the seaside can be a fun day out for the family, it might be bright sunshine, or it could be moody, perhaps enigmatic atmosphere. The East Anglia coastline has it all, and many places can be reached by train. In this issue, we look at improving their rail services.

Cromer



## Also inside this edition of RAIL EAST...

- Cambridge South station
- Station usage for 2022/23
- LNER potential fare rise shock
- Peterborough 'Station Quarter'
- Norfolk County Council rail policy
- New thinking on train timetables
- 20th station adoption awards
- Farewell to John Drake

## TOPICS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE OF RAIL EAST

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### **LNER fares pilot – end in sight for the cheap walk-on railway? – [p.4](#)**

Why the new LNER policy is unequivocally a bad thing for the travelling public

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Details of the 2024 meeting, with an input from Greater Anglia

### **Making the case for better service provision to and from our coastal communities – [p.8](#)**

Greater Anglia should use the next timetable rewrite as an opportunity to radically rethink the frequency and connectivity of the service pattern for coastal stations

### **The latest annual ORR station footfall data – [p.12](#)**

How passenger numbers post-COVID continue to expand right across the region

### **Progress at Cambridge South – [p.14](#)**

Details of the Network Rail update on the project provided at our December 2023 public meeting in Cambridge — and the downside of the Minimum Viable Product

### **The emerging Peterborough "station quarter" – [p.16](#)**

Detailed plans emerge for much needed improvements to this key regional interchange

### **Looking to the future in Norfolk – [p.18](#)**

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### **Twenty not out: two decades of station adopter efforts in East Anglia – [p.19](#)**

Reporting on the latest celebrations of endeavours at stations across the region

### **New Geography = New Timetables? – [p.20](#)**

Within the bigger vision, some thoughts on more immediate timetable enhancements

### **Remembering John Drake – [p.22](#)**

A tribute to a long-term Railfuture member and stalwart of the Mid Anglia Rail Passenger Association (MARPA)

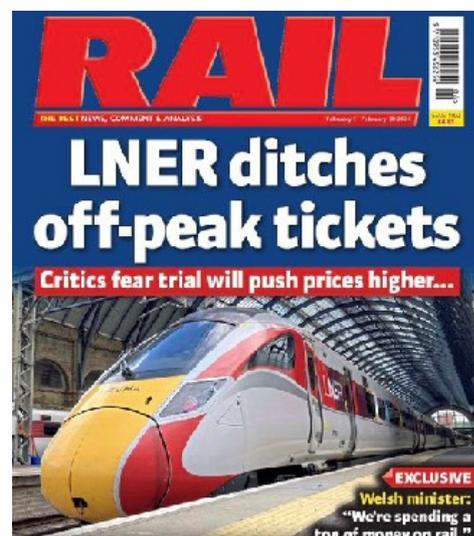
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In 2023 the DfT provoked enormous reaction when it used the train operators as pawns to enable massive ticket office closures, with the government eventually backtracking. It seems not to have learned its lesson, and has used state-owned LNER to increase fares on the pretext of simplifying them. Criticism was swift.

"The removal of the Super Off Peak ticket is an awful move. Just the possibility of having to pay over £192 for a railway ticket to travel between Kings Cross and Newcastle is enough to put you off travelling by train, possibly forever."

....confirmed that there are some services with a 130% fare increase compared to the same service last week

"Railfuture calls upon LNER to reinstate the Super Off-Peak fare immediately"



# CHAIR'S (FINAL) THOUGHTS

## BY NICK DIBBEN, CHAIR, EAST ANGLIA BRANCH



### Awaiting the general election...

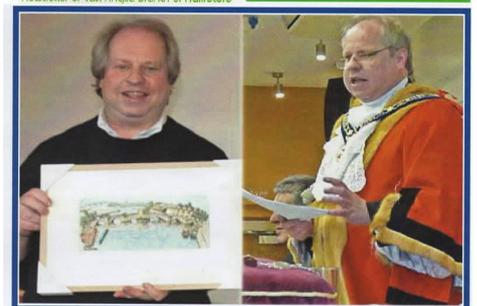
We are told that 2024 is “the year of the election”, with elections scheduled around the world in many countries, including the UK, of course. If previous domestic elections are a guide, there is unlikely to be much discussion here regarding transport. This is a shame – as transport is a key issue for the country that impacts us all. The transport sector is now the largest emitter of carbon emissions – and unlike other sectors is not reducing. As we heard at our Norwich meeting in September 2023, Transport East considers that the UK will not meet its legal obligations to reach net zero by 2050 unless there is radical change in how we approach transport. Simply switching to electric cars will not do the trick and at present there is no obvious alternative to diesel lorries. The energy benefits of switching from lorries to rail freight have been explained in RAIL EAST many times, so it is good to hear that the government has accepted this in its long-term rail freight document. The government is working on a 75% increase in rail freight to 2050. Although this may sound impressive, it is not, and does not represent any modal shift (Railfuture has called for a higher figure). It has been suggested that the government’s figure is so low owing to the lack of capacity in the rail network caused by the cancellation of HS2 Phase 2. So much for long-term thinking.

But what about the future of passenger services? The Transport Secretary keeps saying that passenger numbers are still below pre-COVID levels. This is true, but ignores the growth since the end of COVID, as the annual footfall figures for local stations (pages 12-13) show. It will not be long until they are back up to pre-pandemic levels and look set to grow. It is important to have a view on long-term numbers as this will help determine what is required in the future with respect to rolling stock and track capacity. The railway needs the freedom to change services to meet changing demands – many would argue that the continuing award of rigid contracts (short-term or otherwise) to operators hinders that.

It is not just government that needs to explain its thinking, it applies to the other political parties as well. The Labour Party is committed to bringing franchises back into state ownership when they expire. But what does this mean? One of the benefits of privatisation was that there was a document that set out what would happen over the length of the franchise. This needs to be continued with a seven- to 10-year strategy produced for each route. The strategy would need to cover prospects for electrification, timetable and rolling stock and station improvements to show how the route would develop in line with future government transport objectives. Well, I guess I can dream, but why do politicians find this so difficult?

This is my final contribution for RAIL EAST as I am stepping down from the role of Chair and from the Branch Committee after many years. In that time, I have seen real improvements to the local rail network, and I feel that Railfuture has contributed to getting these improvements implemented. There are still a few key items in the pipeline such as East West Rail and the improvements at Ely, but we need to be thinking about the next batch of schemes and hopefully the ideas in our New Geography for East Anglia as set out in the last RAIL EAST (plus pages 20-21 in this issue) will help inspire further strategic thinking.

I hope to see you at the branch AGM in Bury St Edmunds on 24 February, which will include a verbal presentation (no PowerPoint!) from Greater Anglia.



From East Anglia Branch Secretary to Mayor (St Ives)

In 2013 Nick featured on the front cover of RAIL EAST when he became Mayor of St Ives.

# LNER'S FARE 'INNOVATION' ENDS CHEAP WALK-ON RAILWAY

## BY PAUL HOLLINGHURST

On 16 January 2024 LNER trumpeted a great step forward for passengers with an innovative fare structure, but travellers immediately saw the drawbacks. Fortunately, the proposals will not initially affect people in East Anglia boarding LNER trains at Peterborough or Stevenage. Let's ensure they never will.

### LNER two-year trial sees withdrawal of off-peak tickets

LNER has shocked railway passengers by launching a trial whereby off-peak tickets are being withdrawn from 5 February 2024 for journeys between London King's Cross, York, Newcastle and Edinburgh (but not to/from other intermediate stations), with passengers having the choice between the following fares:

- "Anytime" – expensive and typically only used by business passengers.
- "Advance" – valid only on a specific train
- "70min Flex" ("Flex" in the rest of this article) – a new fare which can be used 70 minutes either side of the specified train, so giving some degree of flexibility.

So, the trial introduces a fare which is less flexible, and arguably more complex than the off-peak fare it replaces. The off-peak fare was valid on any off-peak service, including all weekend services, and could be bought right up to the departure time, was fully refundable and could be used on any operator.

In fact, off-peak tickets are seen as so important that they were chosen to be the regulated fare, so protected against the wishes of the privatised railway companies and are the focus of a six-month (since extended to nine months) trial in Scotland where they are valid on every service.

	Added	Removed	
Advance	70min Flex	Off-Peak	Anytime
Inflexible Use only on booked train	Slightly flexible Use within +/- 70mins of booked train	Flexible Use on any Off-Peak service	Fully flexible
Non-refundable Price and availability vary		Refundable Fixed price Buy at any time	Refundable Fixed price Buy at any time

Railfuture's Honorary President, Christian Wolmar, couldn't be clearer with his view:



**Christian Wolmar** @christianwolmar · 40m

Having now looked carefully at @LNER's plannex ticket changes, I can see no redeeming feature. They are inconvenient, expensive and are a major move away from the walk on railway. @DavidHorne please rethink

1:51 PM · Jan 21, 2024 · 41K Views 20 82 428 5

Railfuture's press release [www.railfuture.org.uk/Press-release-4th-February-2024](http://www.railfuture.org.uk/Press-release-4th-February-2024) ruffled LNER's feathers. They offered "clarity". Wait until they see this article!

There are some useful links from experts and those who have researched it:

- <https://diamondgeezer.blogspot.com/2024/01/Iner-70min-flex-tickets.html>
- <https://busandtrainuser.com/2024/01/21/Iner-are-taking-us-for-fools/>

### How does the new world compare to the old when booking a ticket?

In researching this article, fares were checked for a mid-morning journey from London King's Cross to Newcastle before and after the trial starts, showing how things will change as in the table on the next page.

 Depart > Arrive	Added		Removed		Standard Class Limited availability fare relative to a guaranteed off-peak fare	
	Fixed Only valid for the booked train shown on ticket	Semi Flexible Any valid LNER train, up to 70 mins before or after your booked journey	Super Off-Peak Single	Fully Flexible Any valid train up to 2 days from date shown on ticket	Advance	70min Flex
09:00 > 11:50 2h 50m, Direct	£80.50 Only 4 left	£100.50 Only 4 left	£83.80	£192.80	£3.30 less	£16.70 more
09:30 > 12:35 3h 05m, Direct	£62.70 Only 5 left	£82.70 Only 5 left	£83.80	£192.80	£21.10 less	£1.10 less
10:00 > 12:52 2h 52m, Direct	£80.50	£100.50	£83.80	£192.80	£3.30 less	£16.70 more
10:30 > 13:39 3h 09m, Direct	£66.20	£86.20	£83.80	£192.80	£17.60 less	£2.40 less

In these cases add £20 for the flex

Before the trial a super off-peak fare of £83.80 was available on every journey, so if this looked fine then a passenger could relax and simply book this any time before travelling, knowing they would be able to travel on any off-peak train. If they want to travel a bit more cheaply and can pin down their travel plans, then a saving can be made by buying an Advance, but this ticket is then completely inflexible and if the passenger ends up not being able to travel on that train, then they just lose their money. But apart from that, the decision making is simple.

After the trial starts, the new Flex fare has been added and looking at the fares three weeks ahead some are already significantly more costly than the previous off-peak – despite being less flexible. In some cases, only a handful of tickets were left, so closer to the travel date these will be higher still, or possibly unavailable, leaving just the expensive Anytime.

In most or all cases the Flex is priced at £20 more than the Advance, and you can just board any other train in the time window without having to do anything, unless you want to update the seat reservation, but that’s your choice.

This plus or minus 70-minute time window potentially allows you to catch a train 120 minutes after your planned one, providing that you initially book on the train 60 minutes after the one you plan to catch – simple?

### It is very bad for passengers – what have LNER and the rail industry said?

When the trial was announced LNER had the audacity to say “We're proud to launch our new Simpler Fares pilot for select journeys on our route. Our Simpler Fares pilot aims to make buying tickets even easier and give customers a better experience with just three ticket types.”

**Simplicity isn’t necessarily about reducing the number of ticket types** – it is about how easy the ticket types are to understand, so to suggest the pilot makes buying tickets easier simply because there are only three ticket types doesn’t follow. The decision-making process for travelling at a weekend was often just a simple choice of off-peak ticket – now this involves a complex decision-making process revolving around Advance purchase fares.

What is the government saying? – and let’s be clear, LNER is running this trial as it is owned by the DfT, so effectively a proxy for the government. This is a scheme which has been developed to suit the operators who have long wanted to have more control over journeys using demand management. Rail Minister Huw

Merriman said: "we are delivering on our commitment to reform the railways, working with operators to provide passengers with simpler and more flexible tickets that better suit their needs." Really?

- More flexible? – how can the Flex, which has to be booked for a specific time, be more flexible than the off-peak fare which has been scrapped?
- Better suit their needs? – how can pushing passengers to make decisions about specific travel times weeks in advance be seen as better suiting their needs?

And what about Transport Focus – "The independent watchdog for transport users" – who "put the interests of transport users first and aim to get the best deal for passengers and road users"? It is disappointing to see its new chief executive quoted as saying "the plan to trial demand-based pricing on some LNER routes is a radical change for passengers. Transport Focus strongly supports fares reform and it's right to trial new ideas to see if they work". It's sitting on the fence, but it should be blindingly obvious that this is not the right sort of reform, and LNER should be trialling a welcome rather than unwanted scheme.

Railway commentators, such as Mark Smith ("The Man in Seat 61") are being openly critical, with Mark saying "The existing off-peak fare is refundable, can be used on any operator and via any permitted route. It has a fixed price, so you always know what to expect even if you plan to buy on the day. Good for any off-peak train all day, can be bought on the day at that fixed, known price. It's being replaced with a new Advance fare that is non-refundable, LNER only, direct route only, dynamically priced, and only good for a 2h20 time slot. That represents a significant reduction in flexibility." Roger French in his BusAndTrainUser blog looks at the issue in detail and concludes "LNER are taking us for fools".

And what about Rail User Groups and Railfuture? Despite regularly making valuable contributions, they weren't consulted and are now calling for the madness to stop.

## **Fares Simplification**

Fares simplification is something which everyone agrees needs to be done. LNER, on behalf of the government, is carrying out trials towards this aim. This latest one follows the "single-leg ticketing" trial where returns were all replaced by singles at half the price of the existing return.

The main reason for the single-leg ticketing trial was to simplify off-peak tickets as:

- Singles were often priced almost the same as a return, meaning it didn't make sense to mix and match an off-peak single with any other ticket, as for a small amount more you could get a return, whereas you may want to travel one way with an Advance, or Anytime ticket, and the other way with an off-peak ticket.
- The restrictions were overly complex as the off-peak travel rules were often different for the outward and return legs.

**What was still needed was a simplification of the off-peak rules, and how they are presented to passengers, and once this was done a simplified structure based on Advance, off-peak and Anytime tickets would provide the simpler and more flexible tickets which everyone wants.**

Passengers will not find the "70-minute Flex" an acceptable replacement for the off-peak fare, but there could be a welcome role for it as an insurance policy when travelling with an Advance – pay a bit more (more revenue for the operator) and have a bit more flexibility (good for the passenger). It could be sold as an add-on to an Advance ticket – rather than being seen as a completely new fare.

## **Workarounds**

A 'walk-on' ticket (including an off-peak ticket) allows you to join the train at a later station or depart at an earlier one. This flexibility provides workarounds, as the trial is only for tickets between certain points. For example, buy a ticket from King's Cross to Haymarket (for Edinburgh Waverley) or Manors (for Newcastle) to get the

old off-peak fares, and these fares are the same as for the nearby major station and allow a break of journey there, so are effectively interchangeable. However, if the trial is seen as successful for LNER and the government, the risk is that the trial model will be applied to all fares – so these workarounds will disappear.

## In conclusion

For people who rely on public transport and value the flexibility of off-peak tickets, this LNER trial is a disaster.

Passengers may have plans that depend on the weather, ability to get lifts to the station, arrangements meeting up with friends, and just seeing how things go on the day. All of these will be much more difficult with LNER's proposals.

LNER says it will increase the number of advance tickets and they can be bought just before travelling, but:

1. There is no guarantee there will be any advance tickets left on the train, and these can end up almost twice the price of the existing off-peak ticket
2. If you buy an Advance earlier and your plans change you lose your money
3. LNER has transferred the complexity onto the passenger who now must work out exactly when they want to travel

Simplification? This may be simplifying things for LNER – but it certainly isn't simplifying rail travel for passengers. This is the fares equivalent of the unwanted ticket office closures and will hopefully end up going the same way. At which point LNER can work on an alternative scheme retaining off-peak tickets which will be welcomed by passengers.

See the LNER webpage for what they call "Simpler Fares" <https://www.lner.co.uk/simplerfares> where you can leave feedback by scrolling down to "Share your thoughts on our Simpler Fares pilot"

*[Green Signals](#) free podcast with Nigel Harris and Richard Bowker, interviewed Mark Smith on edition 16 published on 24 January 2024. It is really worth listening to.*

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## RAILFUTURE EAST ANGLIA BRANCH AGM — SAT 24 FEBRUARY

The AGM will take place on Saturday 24 February 2024 at our usual venue, the **Friends Meeting House, St Johns Street, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1SJ** starting at **14.00**. The Agenda is:

- Chair's welcome
- Apologies for absence
- Guest speaker: **Alan Neville** (right) from **Greater Anglia**, which now has a 'direct award' contract, will give an update on current railway developments and thoughts on the future
- Minutes of the 2023 AGM and matters arising
- Branch Report
- Financial update (summary below)
- National Report
- Election of Branch officers and committee (roles listed below)
- Date and venue of 2025 AGM



Finance: expenditure includes printing/posting RAIL EAST, room hire for four public meetings and one-off costs of consultancy for the Haverhill railway campaign and printing the New Geography for East Anglia brochures. Additional funding came from the former Rail Haverhill campaign group and donations at meetings.

Election of committee. There are 14 places available. The roles are Chair, Vice-chair x 2, Secretary, Membership Secretary and nine other committee members.

If members wish to stand for election to the committee or raise any urgent matter for the meeting to discuss, they should notify the Secretary, Paul Hollinghurst ([paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:paul.hollinghurst@railfuture.org.uk)), by Sunday 18 February 2024.

# THE EAST ANGLIAN SEASIDE AND THE RAILWAY TIMETABLE – ROOM FOR IMPROVEMENT

## COVER STORY

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

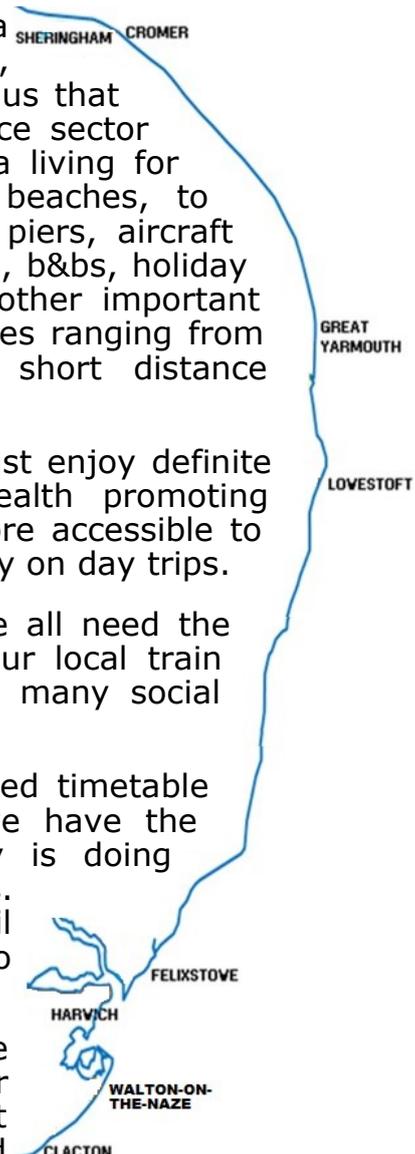
The front cover of RAIL EAST 198 (June 2023) featured a handsome collage illustrating the delights of our region, including some of our lovely coastal towns and reminding us that these towns depend heavily on the summer month service sector attractions to bring visitors into them and thus provide a living for many of their inhabitants. The attractions vary from beaches, to funfairs, to attractive “old towns”, to staging events on piers, aircraft displays as at Clacton and Lowestoft, all serviced by hotels, b&bs, holiday camps, lots of bracing healthy walks. But several have other important functions such as a port that provides vital national services ranging from serving the offshore winds farms, fishing, long and short distance international trade and passenger ferries.

Overlooked is that the many people who live near the coast enjoy definite and proven health advantages in doing so. These health promoting characteristics of coastal environments could be made more accessible to many more of us if we were able to use the train more easily on day trips.

If the pandemic has taught anything, surely it is that we all need the seaside and easy access to it. Over the last 50 years our local train operators seem to have forgotten that. The railway has many social responsibilities that it must honour.

Is it time for a reset? With the prospect of a redeveloped timetable being planned by our main train operator for 2024, we have the opportunity to consider whether the passenger railway is doing enough to support the economy of our coastal towns. Railfuture has long emphasised the deficiencies in our rail network to service freight from the ports – so do we also need a better passenger railway service?

Here is a list of the major East Anglia coastal towns that are rail served, all by Greater Anglia. We show their approximate population based on the 2021 census at about 3km to 6km radius from their centres. Note we’ve extended that out to 6km for Lowestoft and Yarmouth, as they are wedged between the coast and the coastal marshes and in particular continuously built-up Yarmouth is very linear because of this. We show the footfall of stations for the year 2019/20.



Place	Population	Within	Total footfall
Clacton	53,498	3 km	799,344
Frinton and Walton-on-the-Naze	17,784	3 km	385,454 (84,550 + 200,904)
Harwich Town, Dovercourt and Harwich International (PQ)	21,938	3 km	439,533 (151,076 + 177,752 + 110,554)
Felixstowe and Trimley	29,975	3 km of Felixstowe	219,654 (187,544 + 32,178)
Lowestoft and Oulton Broad (North and South stations)	78,645	6 km	598,372 (438,476 + 112,600 + 47,296)
Great Yarmouth (including Gorleston on Sea and Caister)	74,192	6 km	382,022
Cromer, Roughton Road, West Runton and Sheringham	19,201	5 km of West Runton	494,766 (219,894 + 21,766 + 27,212 + 225,894)

About the data: the estimated population is calculated from Output Area counts available in 2021 Census table TS001 (number of usual residents in households and communal establishments). Output Areas are the smallest Census geography and normally contain between 100 and 625 persons. See <https://www.datadaptive.com/pop/>

Currently all these stations are restricted to an hourly service in the off-peak and most have this relatively poor level of service all day long. The services do, however, run early to late, and all provide links inland to the nearest regional centres of Ipswich and Norwich. Colchester, Chelmsford and London are served directly from Clacton.

The East Anglia Branch of Railfuture is firmly committed to campaigning for a half-hourly minimum service on all our routes (though not necessarily from every station). This service level is not always currently possible owing to infrastructure constraints but eventually this level of service must be provided. We note the success of half-hourly services along both sides of the river Exe estuary in Devon serving settlements no larger than our own and with capacity constraints that have been overcome.

Waiting 59 minutes for a missed train or an even longer time for a cancelled service is just not acceptable nowadays. All the routes to the towns listed above need 30-minute interval service levels. And remember, people lack access to a car for a variety of reasons, not just because they haven't got one. Many are stuck without one because another member of the family is already using it.

Why are the footfall results of the current service levels so variable?

The **Clacton and Walton - Frinton** lines table shows that the Tendring network has a relatively high footfall even with a basic hourly service for most of the day. Clacton's one service each hour does serve a wide catchment via stops in the London conurbation and the connectivity they provide into its extensive network. Railfuture supports the notion that numbers would double just by providing an extra train each hour into each of the peninsula's services. These Tendring towns are destinations in their own right – not just Colchester and London commuter towns. The whole Tendring network must have at least a half-hourly service to enable the district to thrive. The purpose of the railway is to enable the economy to do just that, especially as this part of the network directly serves a large swathe of densely populated London that should be ideal for a marketing campaign to fill off-peak services by discounting family fares for days out at the Tendring seaside, adding revenue to cover fixed costs of trains that are running with some available capacity.



In August 2022 the Essex and South Suffolk Community Rail Partnership organised "Bucket and Spade" train trips from Colchester to Walton-on-the-Naze (pictured). Photo from Greater Anglia.

Railfuture has advocated in the past that the car-less inhabitants of the Sudbury area would really benefit if their service connected not just to the London area at Marks Tey but continued hourly to their seaside via Colchester.

**Harwich - Dovercourt** has three well used stations in a relatively compact linear settlement. The main problem is that while connections are good at Manningtree to and from London and



generally to the main settlements situated on the Great Eastern Mainline (GEM), connections from Bury St Edmunds, Newmarket and Cambridge at Ipswich are onto the southbound express that doesn't stop at Manningtree, prolonging the connectional penalty to at least 40 minutes every hour!

The **Felixstowe** service shuttles back and forth from / to Ipswich carrying a reasonable load each time. But it misses the connection from one of its main potential catchment areas by 56 minutes. This service would be much more useful if it was integrated into the Cambridge via Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds service, by reversing upon arrival at Ipswich (after about four minutes) to go onto Felixstowe. The Cambridge train often occupies a platform at Ipswich, perhaps for 25 minutes, causing a capacity problem that would be relieved. Importantly, it would provide a real public service by providing a seamless opportunity to get to the coast for days out for families without a car for whatever reason... and boost the resort's trade. Both very important reasons for the railway to play a fuller part.



**How might Cambridge to Felixstowe services operate?**

Cambridge dep. 09.47 - Ipswich arr. 11.02, dep. 11.06 - Felixstowe arr. 11.34  
 Felixstowe dep. 11.48 - Ipswich arr. 12.16 dep. 12.20 - Cambridge arr. 13.40

However, the connection at Ipswich for London Liverpool Street would get worse from the current 16 minutes to 25 minutes so not everything would be better. A decision would have to be made whether getting more day trippers etc into the town by rail rather than road or none at all if car-less from along the A14 corridor is worth more than inconveniencing London bound travellers. Not everybody will be happy. Additionally, the current two service timetable gives reliability, but once the Cambridgeshire resignalling (C3R) project is complete the fairly frequent problems at Dullingham will be no more.

**Lowestoft** is next along the coast travelling north. It is a major population and economic centre. It has the benefit of three stations serving its conurbation and two lines providing a wide catchment. But is the number of people moving each hour between the town and Norwich represented in the train footfall figures? Should the line to Norwich go half hourly? Should the line to Beccles, Woodbridge and Ipswich be provided with through trains to London, given Lowestoft's importance both as a destination for the energy sector and the district's buoyant holiday trade? Should those trains be speeded up by the provision of better track and by running fast south of Saxmundham to Ipswich if a second stopping service is provided south from there? Of course!

The **Great Yarmouth** conurbation is of similar size to Lowestoft. It is a very popular tourist resort of national significance, one of the most developed in the UK. It has a busy port, again serving a variety of end users as well as the North Sea energy sector. But it has only one station served by one train an hour for much of the day - only to Norwich. Just look at those relatively dismal footfall figures.

Why are they so low? Like all of the coastal towns listed here, its economic and social indicators show significant levels of poverty - which a better train service provision could help

**2023 Summer**  
**OUR BUS WHERRY 100 SERVICE**  
 Wherry Lines  
 Connecting with rail services at GREAT YARMOUTH RAILWAY STATION

- Vauxhall Holiday Park
- Great Yarmouth Railway Station
- Bus Station / Town Centre
- Trafalgar Road
- Seafront Marine Parade
- Britannia Pier
- St Nicholas Road

ADULT SINGLE FARE: £2.00 - AGE 5-19 SINGLE FARE: £1.50  
 ADULT DAY - £4.00 - AGE 5-19 DAY - £2.50  
 FAMILY DAY - £10.00  
 (2 ADULTS 3 CHILDREN OR 1 ADULT 4 CHILDREN OR 5 CHILDREN)

Bus services from Gt Yarmouth station

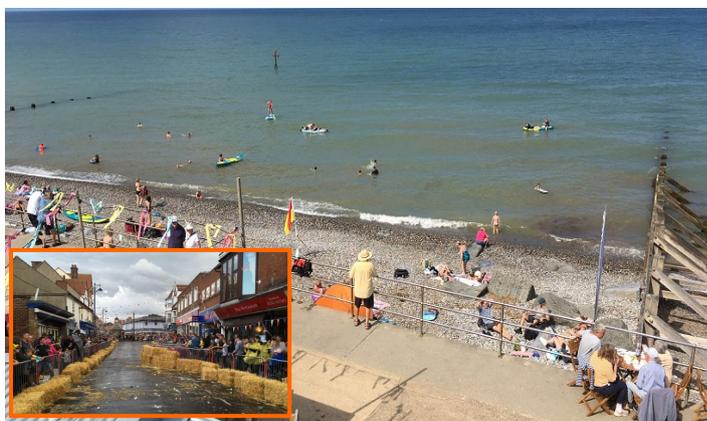
improve. Connections at Norwich are not always good, especially to/from Ely and Cambridge and beyond. As a result, its connectivity is artificially constrained. The linear nature of the conurbation, the lack of additional stations, poor connecting bus services, the poor train service level and that "Norwich-only destination" means that it is often more convenient for the better off to drive to Norwich to take a train.

We suggest the minimum service level should be a half-hourly service provided by one train an hour to Norwich that continues immediately to Ely, Cambridge, Stansted Airport, with a second that runs on the other half hour to Norwich, Thetford, Ely, Peterborough, Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester and provides a connection to London each half hour at Norwich.

Both services must run early to late, seven days a week and vastly expand the connectivity of this town that is vital to the economy of the region and the nation. Of course, the current stops of these trains through Norfolk and Cambridgeshire will enable those important communities to have back their direct services to their seaside for the all-important day out. Again, the railway must play a more dynamic part in the social fabric of our region.

Norwich station, if it supported quick "turn round and off to the coast" trains, would have much more capacity as trains that currently terminate there will not clog it up.

Finally, the service to the **North Norfolk Coast**... principally to the small urban centres of Cromer and Sheringham (pictured, with street event inset). Between them they have four stations serving a small population. But what excellent footfall figures. A good fast service provided by quality trains (as all our towns enjoy) and distributing the users at those four stops, showing the usefulness of multiple stations even in smaller urban areas.



At Norwich there are reasonable connections into London trains and those via Ely. **But the problem on this route is at its Norwich end** as the city's expansion north eastwards has no real provision on the railway to cater for it. There must be new quality travel hub stations in the expanding northeast Norwich suburbs where train, bus and bike meet and are well connected... maybe a station in the Rackheath area, together with enhanced facilities at Salhouse, could be developed for this role? Most people in these fast-growing northern suburbs of Norwich will find the travel time penalty imposed by doubling back to Norwich station to then travel, even if sustainably, north to their coast by rail, not worth considering. The line will need a half-hourly service, perhaps as a part of a long-mooted Thetford - cross Norwich - North Walsham service. Bearing in mind the direction in which Norwich is growing, a stopping service should continue to a similar hub station on the Thetford line to serve the city's southwestern suburbs. This hub would provide better local connectivity not just for North Norfolk and Cambridge but also towards Yarmouth.

**Railfuture urges Greater Anglia to completely rethink how it serves our coasts. The main longer distance services should not peter out at Colchester, Ipswich or Norwich. It has experimented with the use of its bi-mode trains on London - Norwich services. This has shown that there is no reason why portions of these services should not continue to Lowestoft, even Great Yarmouth.**

**East Anglian coastal terminal stations have more than enough platform capacity to deal with through services from further inland... creating extra capacity at all the inland stations mentioned above and easier to operate.**

All photos (including front cover) by Peter Wakefield unless stated otherwise.

Station name [code]	Year ended 31 March						% change 2023	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2018	2022
<b>Norwich [NRW]</b>	4,156,302	4,250,834	4,041,818	967,650	3,213,504	3,963,948	-5	23
Salhouse [SAH]	10,448	11,778	9,856	11,566	12,692	14,006	34	10
Hoveton & Wroxham [HXM]	129,552	136,414	125,260	38,880	112,218	124,804	-4	11
Worstead [WRT]	26,766	25,650	25,404	6,730	22,270	26,816	0	20
North Walsham [NWA]	257,940	265,400	226,116	54,894	221,032	243,208	-6	10
Gunton [GNT]	17,008	19,188	18,560	3,334	22,228	28,446	67	28
Roughton Road [RNR]	16,846	21,766	21,552	3,304	20,956	24,670	46	18
Cromer [CMR]	204,582	219,244	213,936	60,352	212,590	244,294	19	15
West Runton [WRN]	24,844	27,212	26,076	9,144	31,834	32,918	32	3
Sheringham [SHM]	221,480	225,894	182,288	53,214	233,550	232,222	5	-1
Brundall Gardens [BGA]	14,022	12,248	9,408	9,318	11,358	14,558	4	28
Brundall [BDA]	99,930	97,164	89,742	33,282	83,006	92,068	-8	11
Lingwood [LGD]	47,934	46,134	43,536	12,622	37,524	44,230	-8	18
Acle [ACL]	44,914	45,336	41,618	8,478	33,642	40,672	-9	21
Great Yarmouth [GYM]	384,966	381,002	344,276	117,164	347,854	393,322	2	13
Cantley [CNY]	21,682	20,590	17,048	7,004	14,776	15,740	-27	7
Reedham (Norfolk) [REE]	46,020	45,618	41,074	10,770	36,230	37,042	-20	2
Berney Arms [BYA]	966	442	42	348	868	950	-2	9
Haddiscoe [HAD]	12,924	13,580	12,650	2,870	9,086	10,304	-20	13
Buckenham [BUC]	202	216	212	98	300	354	75	18
Somerleyton [SYT]	12,378	12,972	10,898	2,194	8,696	9,010	-27	4
Oulton Broad North [OUN]	115,400	112,600	106,438	21,768	98,344	109,170	-5	11
Lowestoft [LWT]	452,118	438,476	406,440	103,144	354,928	396,618	-12	12
Oulton Broad South [OUS]	47,996	47,696	43,518	7,212	45,430	51,210	7	13
Beccles [BCC]	110,774	114,302	110,152	17,682	97,838	111,814	1	14
Brampton (Suffolk) [BRP]	9,004	9,532	9,858	1,342	7,674	9,390	4	22
Halesworth [HAS]	97,870	102,016	99,838	15,854	84,792	99,576	2	17
Darsham [DSM]	57,728	59,924	61,534	13,092	48,180	55,964	-3	16
Saxmundham [SAX]	154,322	164,400	165,274	35,022	138,696	157,214	2	13
Wickham Market [WCM]	47,890	50,932	55,266	11,570	47,570	57,274	20	20
Melton [MES]	77,748	84,358	82,562	14,742	55,112	67,954	-13	23
Woodbridge [WDB]	206,028	210,440	209,172	50,570	168,694	189,784	-8	13
Westerfield [WFI]	11,110	11,642	11,284	10,188	12,988	13,970	26	8
Derby Road [DBR]	48,310	47,938	46,808	18,040	56,746	73,198	52	29
Trimley [TRM]	32,420	32,178	31,122	7,366	35,612	41,164	27	16
Felixstowe [FLX]	202,568	187,454	170,412	58,704	193,072	218,542	8	13
<b>Ipswich [IPS]</b>	3,351,902	3,416,026	3,292,182	726,756	2,125,686	2,682,574	-20	26
Mistley [MIS]	71,082	75,366	71,784	14,418	36,520	47,958	-33	31
Wrabness [WRB]	30,526	30,348	29,056	5,458	17,280	20,006	-34	16
Harwich International [HPQ]	105,802	110,944	109,876	33,030	74,476	95,228	-10	28
Dovercourt [DVC]	174,788	177,752	163,728	46,460	118,474	130,342	-25	10
Harwich Town [HWC]	140,520	151,076	128,454	27,818	79,978	87,472	-38	9
Diss [DIS]	689,962	700,586	671,300	124,442	422,272	559,966	-19	33
Manningtree [MNG]	1,078,502	1,106,204	1,068,816	200,350	634,684	783,130	-27	23
<b>Colchester [COL]</b>	4,378,760	4,453,178	4,249,444	1,029,176	2,913,266	3,392,742	-23	16
Colchester Town [CET]	758,204	771,090	735,814	178,206	504,448	587,470	-23	16
Hythe [HYH]	234,522	265,716	279,464	59,242	178,362	265,670	13	49
Wivenhoe [WIV]	389,822	401,240	403,306	70,786	216,778	278,916	-28	29
Alresford [ALR]	61,752	62,994	65,602	15,816	47,180	63,450	3	34
Great Bentley [GRB]	76,770	81,144	78,634	18,728	50,764	64,860	-16	28
Weeley [WEE]	33,354	34,908	37,652	11,506	30,360	32,642	-2	8
Thorpe-le-Soken [TLS]	127,928	131,088	135,486	32,264	95,582	119,048	-7	25
Clacton-on-Sea [CLT]	790,866	799,344	763,016	276,656	623,870	705,916	-11	13
Kirby Cross [KBX]	46,386	44,782	47,842	13,726	36,664	48,908	5	33
Frinton-on-Sea [FRI]	191,352	200,904	184,550	51,010	134,952	159,442	-17	18
Walton-on-the-Naze [WON]	131,148	136,708	130,090	40,024	97,784	111,400	-15	14

# STATION USAGE

## COMMENTARY BY PETER WAKEFIELD

The annual station footfall figures were published by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) in December 2023, covering the period April 2022 to March 2023. The recovery from pandemic disaster continues strongly, with the number of journeys through East Anglian stations climbing back to nigh on 61 million. (The number in 2019 was about 74.5 million.) This seems to reflect the slower return to jobs in London compared to a quicker return in our regional centres of Norwich, Ipswich, Colchester and Cambridge.

The high quality of the local train fleet has no doubt attracted new users to rail, as well as attracting previous users back. These latter two factors may be highlighted by the impressively improved footfall at all stations out to Felixstowe from Ipswich and into Norwich from and including Great Yarmouth, Cromer and Sheringham.

The Cambridge economy continues to grow rapidly as shown by the impressive footfall recovery in and around the city. There is evidently a continuing redistribution of users between the two stations —

Cambridge North has taken off like a rocket (1,074,602 compared to a business case of just 800,000) with no doubt a transfer of some users for some journeys from Cambridge Central (9.3 million).

Watching the effect of a third Cambridge station (due to open in 2025) will be fascinating (with many expecting patronage to exceed the 2.2 million in its business case).

The figures for users of the Mid Anglia Route through Bury St Edmunds continue to take off fast, demonstrating the need for the long called for service improvement that reflects the house building boom along the route and the growth of the Cambridge jobs market.

Stations serving the likes of Stowmarket, Royston, King's Lynn, that have both a London and an East Anglian regional centre flow, demonstrate the slower recovery of the London jobs market, or at least, a slower return from "work at home". Bury St Edmunds is now within 67,000 of Stowmarket's footfall figures, with the strong recovery of its growing flows to Cambridge as well as Ipswich. Bear in mind that these footfall figures are up to 31 March 2023.

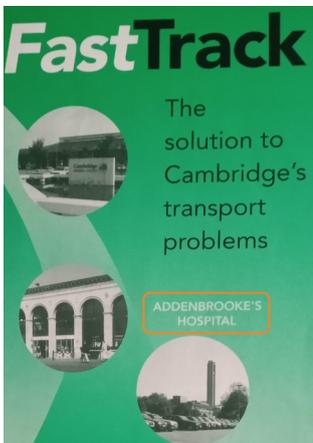
We predict that the number of journeys in 2023/24 will be near to pre-pandemic levels, despite demand having been suppressed by a series of rail strikes.

Station name [code]	Year ended 31 March						% change 2023	
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2018	2022
<b>Marks Tey [MKT]</b>	577,550	604,902	606,914	112,616	302,470	401,950	-30	33
Chappel & Wakes Colne [CWC]	38,544	39,360	46,258	4,090	22,490	28,176	-27	25
Bures [BUE]	58,680	60,432	58,024	8,626	35,712	45,068	-23	26
Sudbury [SUY]	323,052	334,274	334,694	61,846	224,284	278,534	-14	24
Kelvedon [KEL]	844,570	847,748	797,650	119,948	355,632	482,106	-43	36
Needham Market [NMT]	100,648	102,320	100,754	33,484	79,196	94,148	-6	19
Stowmarket [SMK]	935,244	967,114	916,094	185,762	615,232	764,552	-18	24
Elmswell [ESW]	68,546	71,078	71,050	13,570	67,164	91,892	34	37
Thurston [TRS]	72,388	77,592	71,562	15,688	76,036	95,720	32	26
Bury St.Edmunds [BSE]	652,084	665,112	657,942	151,514	564,972	698,282	7	24
Kennett [KNE]	39,512	42,684	42,516	9,408	36,538	43,782	11	20
Newmarket [NMK]	358,798	355,068	335,652	77,602	255,860	303,332	-15	19
Dullingham [DUL]	39,028	41,832	35,086	10,842	22,798	25,314	-35	11
Shelford [SED]	204,618	207,478	216,194	57,942	140,840	170,262	-17	21
Whittlesford Parkway [WLF]	538,972	558,134	552,024	93,042	291,808	376,432	-30	29
Great Chesterford [GRC]	109,116	110,120	110,198	24,252	77,954	86,096	-21	10
Audley End [AUD]	1,011,626	979,414	1,006,730	172,636	502,644	623,570	-38	24
Newport (Essex) [NWE]	184,798	188,094	195,984	64,436	167,346	198,334	7	19
Elsenham [ESM]	246,268	252,716	245,240	63,386	155,610	191,746	-22	23
Stansted Airport [SSD]	8,934,250	9,773,870	8,474,784	794,992	3,368,742	7,906,474	-12	135
Stansted Mountfitchet [SST]	584,288	599,478	578,766	150,136	406,316	455,236	-22	12
Foxton [FXN]	102,170	101,990	105,404	30,564	75,252	87,794	-14	17
Shepreth [STH]	114,294	115,600	117,102	23,676	68,718	91,082	-20	33
Meldreth [MEL]	307,868	295,470	305,888	82,016	181,362	217,158	-29	20
Royston [RYS]	1,477,616	1,467,154	1,435,616	289,662	835,428	1,081,014	-27	29
Ashwell & Morden [AWM]	152,372	156,490	159,254	34,748	104,212	140,696	-8	35
Baldock [BDK]	653,280	637,664	654,320	154,004	387,170	502,586	-23	30
Letchworth [LET]	1,900,970	1,856,558	1,834,720	457,590	1,189,236	1,471,004	-23	24
Hitchin [HIT]	3,237,946	3,265,142	3,233,772	750,478	1,981,466	2,512,254	-22	27
Arlesey [ARL]	674,194	662,676	696,708	152,836	407,022	552,150	-18	36
Biggleswade [BIW]	1,058,184	1,038,164	1,033,622	227,702	592,254	753,050	-29	27
Sandy [SDY]	529,072	497,992	495,528	143,316	385,704	524,068	-1	36
St.Neots [SNO]	1,337,948	1,325,534	1,261,664	246,330	672,958	886,088	-34	32
Huntingdon [HUN]	1,845,126	1,786,548	1,723,088	337,704	949,924	1,302,160	-29	37
<b>Peterborough [PBO]</b>	4,909,286	5,059,576	4,934,692	1,089,232	3,719,850	4,519,016	-8	21
Whittlesea [WLE]	32,556	31,986	35,230	8,026	26,436	33,738	4	28
March [MCH]	403,972	407,914	385,956	87,832	251,638	305,354	-24	21
Manea [MNE]	15,894	18,950	18,834	3,910	16,192	21,038	32	30
Soham [SOJ]					14,196	55,518		
<b>Ely [ELY]</b>	2,281,710	2,386,744	2,363,818	577,460	1,634,548	1,894,014	-17	16
Shippea Hill [SPP]	276	432	164	36	102	142	-49	39
Lakenheath [LAK]	468	454	416	246	476	562	20	18
Brandon [BND]	115,932	117,798	111,572	26,804	93,682	115,102	-1	23
Thetford [TTF]	297,388	299,752	286,700	73,700	226,022	276,522	-7	22
Harling Road [HRD]	3,074	2,880	3,794	646	978	2,104	-32	115
Eccles Road [ECS]	2,700	2,952	2,390	296	1,276	1,830	-32	43
Attleborough [ATL]	159,916	163,062	158,464	41,592	131,918	168,896	6	28
Spooner Row [SPN]	1,628	1,344	276	74	320	382	-77	19
Wymondham [WMD]	186,924	200,332	196,036	56,424	150,466	196,452	5	31
King's Lynn [KLN]	988,498	991,252	931,394	240,162	683,706	757,034	-23	11
Watlington [WTG]	146,014	153,782	138,366	39,078	105,886	107,724	-26	2
Downham Market [DOW]	533,426	549,562	512,772	129,058	341,550	386,270	-28	13
Littleport [LTP]	245,786	248,808	238,488	60,976	153,660	186,752	-24	22
Waterbeach [WBC]	430,050	407,650	377,660	100,176	265,180	309,130	-28	17
<b>Cambridge [CBG]</b>	11,530,238	11,983,320	11,599,814	2,300,528	6,952,780	9,341,600	-19	34
Cambridge North [CMB]	488,878	812,972	949,550	220,958	733,612	1,074,602		46
<b>Total for Railfuture East Anglia</b>	72,375,174	74,631,292	71,514,332	14,989,042	45,676,094	60,719,456	-35	205

# CAMBRIDGE SOUTH PROGRESS – DECEMBER 2023

BY NICK DIBBEN AND JERRY ALDERSON

Around 30 members, plus a few of the public, attended our meeting in Cambridge on 2 December 2023 to hear Martin Seiffarth, Public Affairs Manager Network Rail for the Anglia route, talk about the new station under construction at Cambridge South.



The station, for which Railfuture has been campaigning for many years (originally as Addenbrooke's Hospital station, pictured on cover of leaflet) and which has enjoyed widespread support, will serve the various hospitals, the new bio-medical campus with 27,000 jobs and around 4,000 new homes being built on the southern side of Cambridge. The station will be operated by Greater Anglia and have four platforms served by new loops on the main line. The existing track needs to be slewed to allow for the extra track, which has resulted in weekend route closures that will continue until March 2024. Work is also being carried out at Shepreth Branch Junction to increase line speeds from 30 to 50mph. The additional speed means that the time taken to stop at the station will have less impact.

Other aspects of the station include dual lifts to the platforms (to reduce the chance of there being no working lift to a platform — a problem experienced at Cambridge's other stations) and an increase in bio-diversity due to the green roof and planting around the site. The station will not have car parking but will have plenty of space for cycles and will be served by local buses and connected to the Cambridge cycle network. The station is due to open in 2025 (this expectation was confirmed in a press release in late January 2024) and it is intended that all trains that currently pass the site will call there. In the longer term, further changes to the track will be required to accommodate services on East West Rail.



Images above from Network Rail slides: <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/display3583>. A video was shown — see: <https://www.networkrail.co.uk/cambridge-south-station/>.

During the Q&A, various concerns were raised about the future-proofing of the new station and how good (or not) the passenger experience might be. At the public inquiry in early 2023 which Railfuture attended (as a supporter), the pessimistic usage estimates were challenged at length. Network Rail claimed that virtually no-one would travel from Cambridge North to Cambridge South, on the basis that few people made train journeys that short, ignoring the significant time saving compared to going by road (whether by bus or car). The inquiry was held before the Cambridge North station usage for 2022/23 was revealed to be 34% above its business case, and also 50% of that predicted for Cambridge South.

In 2019 Railfuture met the Network Rail project sponsor at Cambridge station to press for various passenger facilities, taking account of the additional needs of some

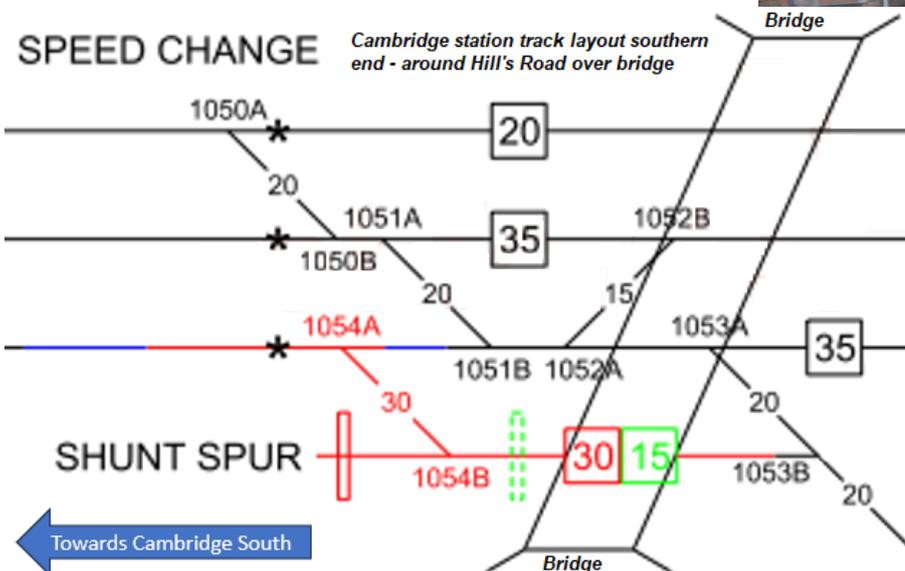
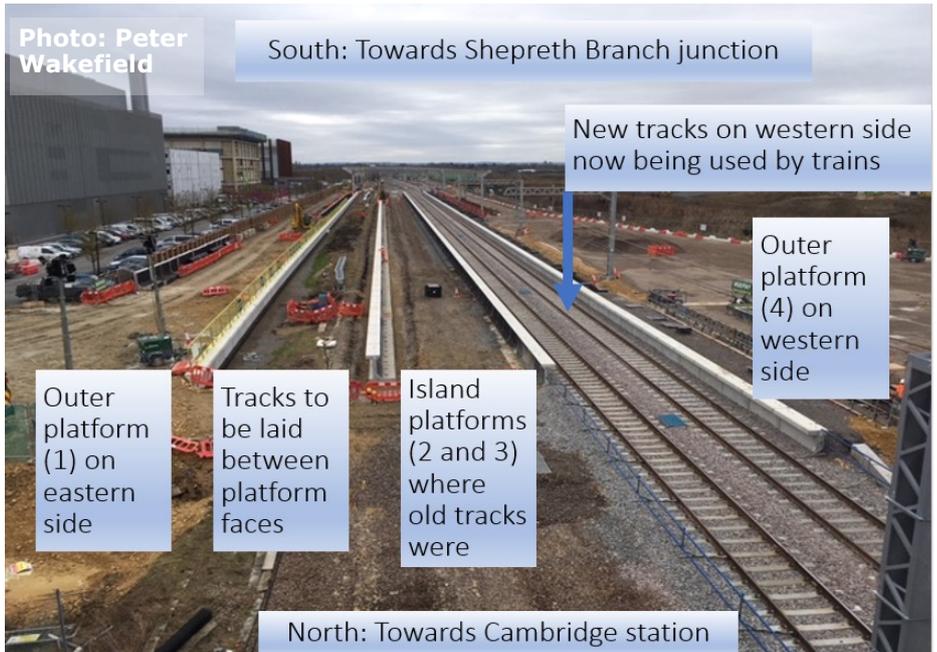
going to or from the nearby hospitals, whether patients or visitors — for example, the need to be protected from the elements. Railfuture was assured that canopies would extend along the entire platform (unlike at Cambridge North where it is only 3.5 carriage lengths out of 12) with heated waiting facilities at platform level. It appears that Network Rail has backtracked on some commitments that it gave.

In response to questions about potential passenger numbers, Martin Seiffarth responded that patronage estimates had to be calculated according to DfT rules, which could not be tweaked for local factors, but the station had been designed to allow for growth in passenger volumes. He also explained that Network Rail was only allowed to spend to provide a 'minimum viable product' (MVP) on capital projects. This is surely a case of providing the least it can for passengers, putting them last.

Since the presentation, two new tracks on the western side are now in use by trains, with the old track on the eastern side lifted to allow platform construction to take place.

At the presentation, Martin was asked whether the shunt spur underneath Hills Road bridge would be extended to join the running line, in order to allow parallel movements south of platforms 7 and 8 at Cambridge station (something that has never been possible as they

shared a single track). He wasn't aware of this, but promised to find out, and has confirmed that the work will go ahead and has already started. The photo below (from Network Rail) is taken south of Hills Road bridge looking north. The buffer stops of the old (unused) shunt spur will be removed and the track re-laid and extended south. New overhead line stanchions have been erected but the wires are still hanging from the old stanchion, which must be removed as it stands in the way of the track.



As well as allowing concurrent southern access to both platforms 7 and 8, the line speed will be increased from 15 to 30mph (see NR diagram, left). As with the changes at Shepreth Branch junction, this will mitigate the extra time spent serving the new station.

# PETERBOROUGH IMPROVEMENTS – PLANS FOR A NEW “STATION QUARTER” SEVERAL STEPS CLOSER

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

There has been a flurry of reports focussed on the development of Peterborough station area. You'll notice from the footfall figures (pages 12-13) that Peterborough station records a footfall of about 5 million with about 1 million interchanges. These interchanges occur mainly between East Coast Mainline (ECML) services and those to and from East Anglia.

RAIL EAST reported on Network Rail's long-term planning report in issue 198 (pages 8-10) – “Peterborough – a vision for network improvements in the city & its hinterland”. The photo below is from the front cover of Network Rail's 'Peterborough Area Strategic Advice' (dated April 2022) document, which contains useful analysis, with track maps for its proposals and options.



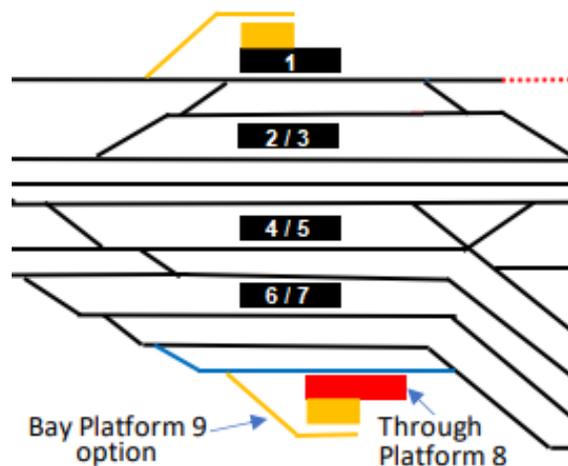
At its 17 January 2024 meeting the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority Transport and Infrastructure Committee was presented with a draft masterplan to invest some £68m in a Peterborough 'Station Quarter' that will create a western entrance to the station and the development of a new district around it. The current eastern entrance will be improved, with better links to the city centre and other associated developments. This plan is a being jointly prepared by Peterborough City Council, the CPCA, train operator LNER and Network Rail. In a unanimous vote, members of the Combined Authority's committee showed their support for the project “to transform Peterborough Station Quarter into a welcoming gateway to the city and to the whole east of England and beyond.”

Railfuture has commented several times on the bleakness of the relatively new platform 6 & 7 (only constructed in 2013) that serves East Anglia, the East and West Midlands – no canopy shelter (as shown in both the aerial view, above and this photo, right, by Peter Wakefield), a very small waiting room, no retail catering. The report acknowledges these



deficiencies and commits funding to make the passenger experience better on those platforms. Let's hope that this is remedied as a priority as a part of this exciting project — and certainly before Network Rail's long-term plans for new platforms (image, right, from the NR Strategic Advice document).

Additionally, the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) is currently producing its next Local Transport and Connectivity Plan (LTCP) with each of its six constituent councils producing ambitious aspirations.



This link goes to the documents referencing all the component authorities that make up the CPCA – <https://cambridgeshirepeterborough-ca.gov.uk/what-we-deliver/transport/local-transport-plan/>.

For Peterborough the LTCP states that there are a number of improvement opportunities, including faster, more frequent services to London, Cambridge and Stansted Airport, Suffolk and Norfolk.

Additionally, the CPCA acknowledges Railfuture's aspiration for our larger towns to create better access to the railway network by opening new stations in the expanding suburbs and we suggested in issue 198 the need for additional stations in Peterborough at Werrington ("Peterborough North") and Hampton ("Peterborough South") to do just that. The LTCP states: "We will continue to work with Invest East Coast Rail to secure investment, improve the passenger experience, improve capacity and reliability, and shorten journey times on the East Coast Main Line. In addition, opportunities to provide additional stations serving Peterborough will be considered at Hampton, Marholm Road, Walton and Werrington."

As importantly, the CPCA document states "We will lobby and liaise with Network Rail and other partners to seek the reinstatement of four tracking from Huntingdon to Peterborough along the East Coast Main Line to provide additional capacity for those wishing to access the city and beyond."

Other transport schemes more generally for Cambridgeshire in the LTCP includes:

- "Buses: a strategy to improve buses to double the number of passenger journeys by 2030. This includes a range of improvements, from more electric buses to significant change to how services operate from the current deregulated system. This would come in the form of either 'enhanced partnerships' or franchising, giving the Combined Authority much greater control over how buses operate.
- Ely Area Capacity Enhancements: Working with Government to secure the funding needed to unlock the long-standing rail bottleneck. This would free up capacity for more passenger services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, while also allowing for more freight and reduced lorry traffic.
- Active Travel: By 2030 at least half of all journeys in towns and cities are walked or cycled. Investments in infrastructure will make walking, cycling, the use of mobility aids, public transport, and other new forms of mobility the natural first choice for journeys."

After this article was written, the Combined Authority voted "the biggest [bus] improvement across Cambridgeshire & Peterborough in a generation." It will "use the £11m raised by [the] mayoral precept ...to introduce 30 major changes in all parts of the county to encourage better use of buses." One of the new services, it is very encouraging to note, is one Railfuture East Anglia has suggested: a "new service [operating from] Chatteris to Manea rail station [then on to] Christchurch - Wisbech, co-ordinated with train times at Manea." Another new service will operate from Fenstanton to Huntingdon railway station. Both provide excellent examples of integrated transport. More on this in RAIL EAST issue 202.

# NORFOLK UPDATE – RAILFUTURE LOOKING TO INFORM COUNTY RAIL POLICY

BY IAN COUZENS

The New Geography for East Anglia, as outlined extensively in RAIL EAST issue 200, sets out a strong vision of how rail can play a much greater role in the transport needs of the entire region than it does at present. Norfolk is no exception to this. Railfuture needs to influence policy makers so that as many of our future aspirations as possible can be fed into county planning strategies.

The Norfolk Rail Group is a county council led grouping of rail stakeholders which meets twice yearly to discuss rail issues and future plans for the county. We were grateful to the chairman for allowing us to make a presentation at its September 2023 meeting, setting out Railfuture's vision for rail in Norfolk for the next 30 years.

This was timely, as group stakeholders have been invited to put forward proposals for inclusion in the county council's Rail Prospectus, an important document which sets out the council's aims and aspirations for the foreseeable future. The current prospectus dates back to 2013 (pictured) and although a new draft was prepared in 2020, this was never adopted due to the pandemic. Railfuture submitted our proposals, strongly informed by the New Geography thinking, in December 2023 and we hope that improvements will be made to the original draft prospectus. While some of the draft content we can all agree with, such as aspiring to half hourly interval services on all lines, other areas need improving — in particular the need to identify potential new station sites in the greater Norwich area and elsewhere within the county. So we have made a strong pitch for potential new stations at Hethersett, Long Stratton and South Lynn.

We have also sent out a clear message that Norwich's existing station at Thorpe is no longer sufficient for serving the whole Greater Norwich area. Many potential rail journeys are simply not being made because access to Thorpe is inconvenient for much of the city, and some travellers will prefer to drive as a result.

Access to stations at Hethersett and Long Stratton will make rail travel more accessible to residents in South and South West Norwich and South Norfolk generally. It would also follow that overall journey times could be reduced. Similarly, planned new developments to the south of King's Lynn make doubling back to the town centre station unappealing, and hence Railfuture's support for a new station at South Lynn.

Local authorities have an active role in the provision of new station sites, so we will be looking closely to see which sites make it into the final version. When the Prospectus is finally delivered, proactive engagement will be needed by the county council to turn aspirations into reality. The Devon metro stands as an exemplary reminder to show what can be done if the commitment is there.



Norfolk Rail Prospectus



## Norfolk Rail Prospectus Chapter 5: Network-Wide Priorities

### The Essentials

#### Headlines

- Step-free access to all platforms
- Stations to be kept in good repair
- Good standards of cleanliness to be maintained, especially toilet facilities at stations and on trains, and the inside of trains
- Rail industry staff to provide high quality customer service
- A consistent, seven day a week operation of rail services. Where the railway is planned to be closed, passengers should be made aware of this when purchasing tickets.

The 2013 Norfolk Rail Prospectus listed some essentials for a good railway. RAIL EAST readers might add punctuality and value-for-money fares.

# TWO DECADES OF THE EAST ANGLIAN 'STATION ADOPTION' ANNUAL AWARDS

BY BEN WALSH

RAIL EAST readers will know that station adoption involves volunteers looking after stations in a variety of ways. I have been involved in the scheme at both Cambridge and Dullingham, so I looked forward in October 2023 to the annual event where the hard work of over 300 volunteers at more than 120 stations was celebrated.

These awards reached a significant milestone in the year just gone — station adoption has now been going from strength to strength in East Anglia for 20 years. Initially developed under the first franchise holder, Anglia Railways, the baton has been passed, via National Express, to our current train operator, Greater Anglia (GA). The man in charge — Greater Anglia's Alan Neville — knows everything that there is to know about station adoption; from 'long-time gardener' to 'long-time railman', if Alan doesn't know, then it's probably not worth knowing!

The 20<sup>th</sup> annual Station Adoption Awards took place at Ipswich Town Football Ground (Ben is pictured to the right of Alan). At each award ceremony, Alan and his staff pull out all the stops to make the event successful... and this one was no exception!



A video was shown — see <https://youtu.be/S-Y-we4wrPo?si=W1XYx-z1njaePTkF> — which conveyed something of the benefits the adopter scheme brings to communities and to the station adopters themselves. And this news item from GA has more detail about some of the award winners at this special event — <https://www.greateranglia.co.uk/about-us/news-desk/news-articles/greater-anglia-recognises-community-rail-%E2%80%98heroes%E2%80%99-awards>.

It really was a memorable occasion, and my thanks go to Alan Neville and Kerri Worrall from GA who put the event on together. And here's to further success in 2024 and the 21st anniversary of this important scheme.

As a special feature additional to the award of various prizes, on this occasion all attendees from around the region were given a magnificent fully illustrated book (right) as a memento of the event — accompanied by a souvenir mug and a celebratory badge to record the achievement.



# NEW GEOGRAPHY FOR EAST ANGLIA – NEW THINKING ON TIMETABLES NEEDED

BY PETER WAKEFIELD

We hope that RAIL EAST readers found the emerging work Railfuture commissioned from a respected consultant — and outlined in our special issue 200 — about the shape of the future East Anglia rail network interesting. The various new short rail links proposed will revolutionise how we move around our region, making the network much more accessible to many more people. **Railfuture sent a copy of the brochure to every county councillor in Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Essex. Any feedback from them and you will be gratefully received.**

Bearing in mind that Railfuture supports the establishment of a new east west railway from the Great Eastern (GEM) to West Anglia (WAML) mainlines, we note with interest the very recently proposed “upgrade” of the 15 miles of the A12 between Chelmsford and Colchester at a cost of £1.7 billion. Railway project costs have increased of course with inflation increasing costs by 40% over the last five years... worth remembering for any new investment in infrastructure.

In the meantime, the timetable of the current network needs to be improved to try to cope with demographic changes we’ve previously noted in RAIL EAST issue 197.

To illustrate the point, here we are at Westerfield in early January 2024 (both photos by Peter Wakefield). But can we get the simple planning things done first?

1. A Lowestoft bound train passes through the station. The footbridge, from which the scene is recorded, is a part of huge housing development of 2000 new homes. Many could be within a 10-minute walk or a few minutes’ cycle ride of the station. But no active travel link to the station has been provided. The most obvious route would appear to be along the perimeter of Network Rail’s depot, shown in the photo (above).



2. The bridge in the photo (right) is worthy of attention. Cycleway width and of never-ending walkways to gain height... it doesn’t seem as if it will provide access to the station though. A path from its eastern end surely must be forged to the station’s upside platform.



However, back to the timetable needed now...

When Greater Anglia changes its West Anglia timetable in the near future, Railfuture would like these changes to be planned in:

## Norwich-Stansted Airport:

- Operate hourly early until late seven days a week. Currently Monday-Friday peak services do not cross Cambridge to/from the Airport owing to unidentified “level crossing issues” somewhere south of Cambridge.
- Operate Norwich - Stansted Airport services to run seven days a week in the same timings as Monday-Saturday. This will spread out the Sunday service pattern from the current pattern more “around the hour”.

- Ely / Cambridge is a major flow and currently on Sundays the trains leave Ely at xx.53; xx.57; xx.04 and return from Cambridge at xx.50; xx.59; xx.03.
- Operating the GA service Norwich to Stansted Airport in the weekday timings would give better spread from Ely at xx.53; xx.57, xx.27 and back from Cambridge at xx.59; xx.03; xx.20. Better, if not perfect, intervals.
- Extend the Norwich - Stansted Airport service to / from Great Yarmouth.

**Bishop’s Stortford - Cambridge North local services:** reorganise off-peak stopping train service to operate at half-hourly intervals. This would entail an additional service every hour from 08.50 to 14.50 southbound. Ideally this should be extended by one of the existing 2tph Stratford - Bishop’s Stortford services six times... just six extra return journeys Monday-Friday. This is because huge developments are in the pipeline around Great Chesterford and Whittlesford Parkway.

**Cambridge North to London Liverpool Street off-peak hourly service.** Consider diverting this service via Stratford to enable easier access to the concert hall, museums shortly to be completed there as well as better access to the Westfield Centre.

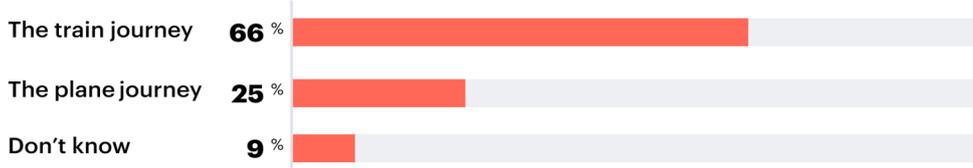
**Ipswich-Bury St Edmunds-Newmarket-Cambridge:** Monday-Friday introduce additional peak hour services to / from Cambridge; introduce an additional late-night service from Cambridge to Bury St Edmunds on Friday and Saturday by extending the last train from Ipswich, currently terminating at Bury, on to Cambridge and returning east at 23.47, one hour later than the existing timetable. The departure from London King's Cross at 22.44 would connect, giving the major towns of Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds a much later departure from London via Cambridge than currently possible.

**TRAIN VS PLANE**

A survey by YouGov published in January 2024 (right) showed that people would prefer to travel by train rather than catch a plane. A representative sample of just over 3,000 were asked "If you had to make a journey in the UK and there was no difference in the cost but the train journey took a bit longer than the plane journey, which would you generally choose?"

**If you had to make a journey within the UK, and there was no difference in cost, but the train journey took a bit longer than the plane journey, which would you generally choose?**

All adults (3273 GB adults - 16 January 2024)



YouGov | What the world thinks | yougov.co.uk

<https://yougov.co.uk/topics/travel/survey-results/daily/2024/01/16/b1f46/2>

Overall 66% said train, 25% plane and 9% didn't know. When it came to age of respondents, surprisingly the greatest number who would take the plane were 18-24 year olds at 31%, with people over 65 the least likely at 19%.

Other than the perhaps unexpected age bias in people’s travel preferences, it’s questionable whether the survey actually tells us very much. Its big cop out of course is the “no difference in price” qualification. As the article about changes to LNER fare structures between London, Newcastle and Edinburgh Waverley illustrates (see pages 4-7), rail users wanting the flexibility of walk on fares look likely to be paying much more than is already the case, and with less flexibility than they currently enjoy. And for travellers on a budget, existing price differentials between domestic flights and intercity rail tickets are already substantial.

## **JOHN ALBERT DRAKE – 11/03/1941 - 30/12/2023**

Some sad news to report. John died on 30 December 2023 after a short illness, aged 82. At the time of his death, he was honorary chair of MARPA, the Mid-Anglia Rail Passengers' Association, and until as recently as November 2023 he had also served as secretary for a number of years. Longstanding Railfuture members will also have known John as a member from the days of the Railway Development Society.

A Cambridgeshire boy to his core, John lived in the village of Cheveley near Newmarket for his entire life. After attending Soham Grammar School, he went into training as an accountant. As a chartered accountant his expertise was much in demand. Retiring early, he took on private clients and was professionally active until quite recently. In terms of using his skills voluntarily for the benefit of other organisations, John was treasurer for the Ffestiniog Railway East Anglian Group at the time of his death, a role he had conscientiously carried out for over 50 years. He had been honorary auditor for Railfuture East Anglia's accounts for a number of years and served as voluntary auditor for Cheveley PCC.



John had a lifelong interest in preserved railways; apart from his involvement with the Ffestiniog Railway (he asked for donations to the Ffestiniog Railway Society rather than flowers at his funeral), he was also a member of the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, Sittingbourne & Kemsley Light Railway, The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society, Friends of the Great Central Main Line and the North Norfolk Railway (aka Poppy Line).

His principal contribution to the promotion of railways and rail travel was undoubtedly his involvement with MARPA. One of its founder members in 1990 under the aegis of Railfuture (when it was initially known as MISTA, the Mid-Suffolk Travellers' Association), John devoted many hours to the sometimes-frustrating work of lobbying for better services and passenger facilities on the Mid-Anglia route connecting Ipswich with Cambridge and Ely. That the quality of the service provided has improved immeasurably over the past three decades is in no small way directly the consequence of the work John and other committed volunteers have done in their engagement with the railway industry. The Mid-Anglia route goes from strength to strength, and whilst lobbying ambitions still need to be fulfilled – notably an hourly service between Ipswich, Ely, March and Peterborough, as well as the establishment of a Mid-Anglia Community Rail Partnership – the high quality of the service available in 2024 reflects John's patient industry and diligence over many years. MARPA members – and particularly those serving on the rail user group's committee – will undoubtedly miss his knowledge and wisdom on rail matters.

The funeral took place at West Suffolk Crematorium on Friday 26 January 2024. Apart from the family members about 50 people attended, mostly with railway connections. It was described by FLUA's representative, Robert Stripe, as a "beautiful service on a beautiful day in beautiful surrounds". Peter Wakefield represented Railfuture.

John was unmarried. He leaves behind two sisters, Jean and Sylvia, and four nephews to whom we offer our condolences and best wishes.

## SPEEDING UP TRAINS

When Greater Anglia (GA) introduced its Class 755 bi-mode trains, which can accelerate much better than the diesel trains that they replaced, it was expected that the timetables would be tightened. This is not possible on all routes because of inadequate infrastructure (e.g. the East Suffolk Line where passing points are very limited). However, the timings for a GA train on 10 February showed how 12 minutes could be recovered between Ipswich (where a train departed 14 minutes late because of disruption in the Ely area had affected freight trains) and its arrival at Peterborough scheduled 100 minutes later. This was despite the single track section between Soham and Ely, single-lead junctions at Haughley and Ely North Junctions and the two bridges north of Ely station with severe speed restrictions. Just imagine what could be achieved once these limitations are (eventually) removed.

Time	Station	Platform	Greater Anglia
12:00	Ipswich		
Dep. 12:14	Platform 3B		+14
12:11	Stowmarket		
Dep. 12:23	Platform 2		+12
12:29	Bury St Edmunds		
Dep. 12:40	Platform 1		+11
12:49	Soham		
Dep. 12:58			+9
13:00	Ely		
Dep. 13:06	Platform 1		+6
13:11	Manea		
Dep. 13:17	Platform 1		+6
13:20	March		
Dep. 13:24	Platform 1		+4
13:31	Whittlesea		
Dep. 13:35	Platform 1		+4
13:40	Peterborough		
Arr. 13:42	Platform 6		+2

## 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 essential in order to make RAIL EAST visually attractive.

All submissions by **24 May 2024**, 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](mailto: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/>.

## JOIN RAILFUTURE — FOR A BIGGER, BETTER RAILWAY

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 works *constructively* with the rail industry, government (national and local), businesses and stakeholders to improve and expand the railway.

Annual membership fee is **£20** (£22 for joint membership); under 26 years can join for just £14. Join online at <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/join/> using a credit/debit card or PayPal.

# **railfuture** East Anglia

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Also see <https://www.railfuture.org.uk/East+Anglia+Contacts>

## **MEETING DATES AND VENUES**

**SATURDAY 24 FEB 2024**

Friends Meeting House  
St John's Street

**BURY ST EDMUNDS**

IP33 1SJ

**SATURDAY 22 JUNE 2024**

St Mary's at Stoke  
Stoke Street

**IPSWICH**

IP2 8BX

**SATURDAY 28 SEPT 2024**

Friends Meeting House,  
5 Upper Goat Lane

**NORWICH**

NR2 1EW

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.

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