

East Anglia

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Counting campaign

Eleven members of Railfuture East Anglia and the Mid Anglia Rail Passengers Association conducted a passenger count at Dullingham station, between Cambridge and Newmarket, on 16 September. The station is served infrequently – only every two hours. If a train stops at Dullingham it does not stop at Kennett and vice versa. The team counted 127 passengers, with the busiest train being the 08.00 to Cambridge and the 16.59 arrival back. Besides counting, the team walked around the adjacent, gentrified village looking at “to the station” signs (good), signs at the station to the village (not so good), as well as car and bicycle parking facilities. We are sending our comments to Dullingham Parish Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council and the train operator. We want to see all trains call at the station, on the basis that it serves a very wide catchment area. More information about the user group: www.marpa.org.uk

Interchange worries after through trains are withdrawn

Through trains from Lowestoft to London are being withdrawn on 11 December with the result that large numbers of passengers will be changing trains at Ipswich. The extra footbridge and new lifts at this busy station will not be ready until the end of March at the earliest, with some estimates putting it as late as May before the work is complete.

National Express East Anglia has promised to have extra staff at Ipswich to help passengers during this period. The East Suffolk Travellers' Association is monitoring the situation and asking passengers to complete a short questionnaire for each journey they make between East Suffolk line stations and destinations south of Ipswich.

ESTA will then report to NXEA, Passenger Focus and other relevant bodies on the good and bad points of these journeys. The questionnaire is available on ESTA's website www.eastsuffolktravel.org.uk or from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft NR32 1RQ.

Government approves £3m spend on the Beccles loop

Transport Secretary Philip Hammond announced approval at the end of October for Network Rail to spend £3 million on the passing loop at Beccles for which ESTA and Railfuture have long campaigned. Suffolk County Council had already in theory committed £1 million of the £4 million cost and rail campaigners hope the project will not fall victim to any cuts in local government spending.

During the summer and early autumn, ESTA met with each of the four MPs through whose constituencies the East Suffolk Line runs, and their support for this project has been welcome.

Unless there are any last-minute problems, it should enable an hourly Ipswich-Lowestoft service to start running in 2012, for the first time since 1962. Currently there is a gap of two hours between trains. ESTA will then press for some trains to continue again, through, to and from London.

Guy McGregor, Suffolk County Council member with responsibility for transport, said: “This is absolutely wonderful news and we must now make one final push to make sure that the other £1 million will be found.”



Stamps for charity

Railfuture relies largely on members' donations to fund its campaigning but we are always looking at ways to increase our income from other sources. One idea is for members to save the stamps that come on their letters. The stamps can be sold off by dealers to collectors around the world. If you are happy to help Railfuture raise funds in this way, please cut the stamps from their envelopes leaving a quarter of an inch margin of paper around the stamp and the post mark. You can ask friends and relatives to help as well. Wait until you have a rea-



sonable amount and then send them to Stamps for Charity, Railfuture, 10 Bellamy Avenue, Hartcliffe, Bristol BS13 0HW. Stamps for Charity is run by Stephen Sainsbury who offers the service to many charities and clubs.

Please ensure that you include Railfuture in the address so Stephen can allocate the correct funds to Railfuture. Stephen, who is also chair of the New Somerset and Dorset Railway, a corporate member of Railfuture, said: “I can handle huge amounts of stamps. I sell around 100kg each week. Railfuture can make very good money from this.”

Be a Railfuture winner

Having multiple lottery entries certainly helps your chances of winning – Garth Smith has seven entries a month and has picked up three prizes in six months!

Entries cost just £1 per month each and half of the money raised is returned in prizes while the remainder goes into Railfuture funds to help our campaign. With a top prize of £42 and currently six prizes per month, you can help us and help yourself by joining the Lottery.

Recent prize winners are: **May:** Ray King, Garth Smith, Michael Oakley, John Henderson, Joan Powell, Keith Green.

June: Kenneth Heatley, Andrew Carr, Alan & Hilary Everett, Alexander Macfie, Colin Palmer, Graham Smith.

July: Eric Smith, Mary Bosi, Robert Burrows, Garth Smith, David Barr, Alan & Maura Williams.

August: Michael Breslin, Ralph Coulson, P & J Gardiner, R Gibson, John Barfield, John Ward.

September: David Bailey, Bill Berridge, Martin Lloyd, Fiona Mackey, Janet Cuff, Arthur Davies.

October: Alan and Maura Williams, Graham Smith, Michael Breslin, Alan & Hilary Everett, Garth Smith, G Gillham.

You can join by using PayPal at www.railfuture.org.uk/lottery/ or, for details, write to Railfuture Lottery, 24 Chedworth Place, Tatingstone, Suffolk IP9 2ND, or email lottery@railfuture.org.uk.

Wessex

By John Friedberger
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South coast alternative

Members in the Portsmouth, Havant, Fareham and Southampton areas report favourably on the services provided by Southern on routes to Brighton and London Victoria via Gatwick. Although taking longer than the South West Trains service to Waterloo, the Victoria route provides a good alternative route to London with some competitive fares. Southern is planning a rolling stock re-allocation in the December timetable which will see suburban class 313 trains with no lavatories employed on the Portsmouth to Littlehampton service and occasionally perhaps to Brighton. This move is justified by Southern as the need to provide more class 377 stock, with selective door opening, to form 10-car trains in the London area. The snag for coastal passengers is that, for the first time since electrification in the 1930s, there will be no toilets on some of their trains.

The inconvenient truth about travelling by train



It is interesting to note that “toilet facilities on the train” consistently ranks as the lowest category of “satisfaction” in the many surveys conducted by Passenger Focus.

Loos must be the most tedious subject with which train operators must deal and we have sympathy with those of their employees who have to try to keep them clean and serviceable. But with an increasing number of unstaffed stations having no toilet facilities, it becomes especially important for passengers.

Railfuture focuses on neglect at stations

Station maintenance and refurbishment is a piecemeal business with many parties involved. In this area, there are several examples of South West Trains spending money to improve parts of the station for which it is responsible while other structures such as bridges and canopies are left in a bad state by Network Rail. The branch is therefore planning to conduct a simple survey in the early part of 2011 to identify particular problems.

Winners in the Railfuture annual draw

£500 P Sherwood, Steep, Petersfield. £200 D Seymour, London SE4. £100 Mr Hennessey, London EC2. £50 J Geoffrey Todd, Harrogate.

£20 winners Roger Blake, Stoke Newington, London; John Hammond, Bruce Grove, London; Mr Freeman, London W1; Martin Stoolman, Exeter.

£10 David Bushall, Leeds; J Michael Williams, Machynlleth; Alan Everett, Stamford Hill, London; F W Smith, Ilkley; Kirsten Davies, Aberystwyth; C Wells, Burscough; Ian Sesnan, London SW2; Mr James, Ilford.

Railway history is now at risk from the axe

Railways originated in Britain and have a long and honourable tradition of service to this country and throughout the world, where lines were engineered or supplied by British industry.

They helped to shape Britain today and are set to form the basis of the sustainable transport system the country will need tomorrow.

The rich railway heritage of Britain is hugely important and has rightly been protected by Government for over 60 years.

Inexplicably, this is being swept aside in the Public Bodies Bill, now going through the House of Lords, which lists the Railway Heritage Committee for abolition.

I am a member of this Committee, and like my colleagues, am happy to serve on a voluntary basis. None of us are paid, so costs are very low, and the mix of skills is impressive – members are drawn from the rail industry, the National Railway Museum, expert archivists and heritage railways.

Our role is to designate items of historical significance which help to tell the continuing story of Britain's railway, and then find good homes for these items when they are no longer required by the companies that own them. When Sea Containers collapsed and the GNER franchise ended, the committee was instrumental in

saving their records from the skip when the headquarters offices were cleared on the orders of the receiver.

The papers included their struggle to win the franchise twice, as well as their battle with competitor Grand Central.

When the original (1842) mileposts on the Edinburgh-Glasgow line were being vandalised, the committee's designation helped to protect the remaining posts, one of which is now on display at Queen Street. Designated items include the Brunel drawings, the royal train, hospital coaches from the first world war (owned by the Army) and most recently, the Falsgrave signal gantry at Scarborough, which will be used at Grosmont on the North York Moors Railway.

So why is RHC on the list? The Secretary of State, Philip Hammond, says he is not persuaded there is a need for statutory protection for the heritage of the railway when it does not exist for other modes of transport. What is your view?

The Bill goes to the House of Commons for consideration early in the new year, so now is the time to write to your MP if you do not agree.

News round-up from Heritage railways

Welsh Highland

The first-ever train ran from Caernarfon to Portmadoc on 31 October, and in January some



SAVED BY RHC: Britain's last semaphore signal gantry at Scarborough, to be used on the North York Moors Railway

public “taster” trips will be running prior to introduction of full services on 20 April.

Strathspey

Contractors for Transport Scotland are on site to establish ground conditions for the prospective trunk road scheme on the A95 which would include a new tunnel to take the Strathspey Railway a further three miles from its present terminus to Grantown on Spey West. The extension will be valuable in linking Grantown with the Highland main line at Aviemore.

Other heritage news

This autumn has seen the start of celebration of 60 years of heritage railways with a re-run

on 6 October of the final train of the Haydn Jones era on the Tallylyn Railway prior to its closure for the winter in 1950.

In May next year, the anniversary of the first trains to run in preservation will mark the pioneering work of Tom Rolt and others back in 1951.

Britain's 108 heritage railways have done well to weather the recession this year and have again been a mainstay of tourism despite the economic squeeze.

Few will have broken any records in these tough trading conditions, and all will welcome your support over Christmas and through into 2011.

Picture: NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM