

## East Anglia

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### Lowestoft second thoughts?

The East Suffolk Travellers' Association issued a 44-page report in January of its survey of 1,400 passengers using Lowestoft station. A key finding was that 20% of passengers said they would use the station less, or not at all, if it were moved 400 yards inland as proposed by the regeneration company First East. Indeed, 80% of those replying opposed moving the station and only 20% approved. Some of those opposed to moving it stated that the proposal was an unnecessary waste of money. Over 50% of passengers went on foot to or from the station and one third of visitors were heading for the shops or the beach, which are within easy walking distance of the station. It may be mere coincidence that First East has announced an alternative plan, which would apparently involve cutting the tracks back by only 20 yards. At the time of writing, a consultation exercise was being promised for February, and ESTA will have plenty of data to use when it responds. ESTA's report has in any case been sent to First East, local councils, the train operating company and Network Rail. It will also be available to companies bidding to run the East Anglia franchise from April 2011. ESTA acknowledges financial help from Railfuture, and the help given by several East Anglian branch members, in conducting this important survey.



SHERINGHAM: Putting the link back

Picture: Nick Dibben

### The missing link

Work is under way in Sheringham to link the North Norfolk Railway to the Network Rail system. After many expensive schemes were put forward, a workable solution has been found in providing a "tramway" connection which avoids the need for a level crossing and expensive signalling. Although this means that National Express East Anglia trains cannot use the NNR station on a regular basis, it does allow the occasional special train to use the link. Following a presentation of the scheme by the NNR at a branch meeting, branch members have raised money towards the construction costs.

### Cambridge station

The branch has welcomed detailed proposals issued by Network Rail to provide a new island platform at Cambridge station. The new platform will greatly increase the capacity of the station. Changes to track and signalling are small and the work should be carried out with minimal disruption to existing passengers.

# Stalwarts honoured

We congratulate John Bigny on his award of the MBE in the New Year Honours List, writes Trevor Garrod. It is particularly encouraging when a long-time champion of rail passengers is recognised in this way.

John, now 74, has been long-time secretary of the Edenbridge & District Rail Passengers' Association and used to commute to work on the Uckfield Line.

He was also for many years a member of the Rail Passengers' Committee for South East England (now succeeded by Passenger Focus).

"I was overwhelmed and delighted," John told the *Kent and Sussex Courier*. "It means a great deal to me and it means a great deal to the association."

He said campaigning took a great deal of patience.

"You never stop campaigning although sometimes you think about throwing your hands into the air."

After his retirement from the National Union of Teachers, John worked for Railfuture from 1989 as administrative officer for 10 years, when his duties, always carried out admirably, included arranging and minuting meetings, preparing documentation and undertaking the despatch of *Railwatch*.

His MBE is richly deserved. The list also saw the CBE awarded



MBE: Campaigner John Bigny

to Adrian Shooter, chairman of Chiltern Railway and OBEs to ex-Northern managing director Heidi Mottram, Stuart Baker, deputy director of rail projects at the Department for Transport and Michael Hart, director of the Ffestiniog Railway Company and chairman of Welsh Highland Railway Construction Ltd.

Chris Bolt, a former head of the Office of Rail Regulation who is now arbiter of the London Underground public-private partnership, is made a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

Also awarded MBEs were Richard Burningham, manager of the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership and Peter Roberts, chairman of the Association of Community Rail Partnerships.

## Railfuture elections

Railfuture returning officer Chris Precey reports that there will be no election for the board this year. He said: "There were originally four nominations for the three vacancies but one has decided to withdraw his nomination. Thus we are reduced to three nominations for the three vacancies. The names of the new board members will be announced at the annual general meeting."

## Eye on rail user groups

The national list of over 250 rail user groups has been completely revised and updated by Railfuture's rail user group liaison officer Tony Smale, and is now available on the Railfuture website, [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)

From the left-hand menu on the home page, select *links* then *rail user groups*. You can also see a local list of rail user groups on the web pages for each Railfuture branch.

If you don't have access to the internet, you can request a copy of the national list by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to Tony at 63 Church Lane, Wool, Wareham BH20 6DD Email: [ruginlink@railfuture.org.uk](mailto:ruginlink@railfuture.org.uk)

Tony welcomes comments about rail user groups in your area. In particular: do you know of any that are not included in the list, or are there any shown that you know to

be disbanded? Tony receives dozens of newsletters and magazines from rail user groups around the UK, and makes a careful note of all the news stories and snippets that could enlighten or inspire other RUGs.

These are then pasted together to create a *Rail User Express* news digest which is sent out every six weeks or so by email to subscribing rail user groups. Tony's news digest is also posted on the Railfuture website for all to see. Select *members*, then *Railfuture contributors*.

If you would like to help with updating the Railfuture website, perhaps taking responsibility for one branch or for any of the topics on the site, please contact Ray King. Email: [editor@railwatch.org.uk](mailto:editor@railwatch.org.uk). You can learn a new skill and help Railfuture at the same time.