

# The Fenman

Newsletter of the Fen Line Users Association

[www.flua.org.uk](http://www.flua.org.uk)

[fenman@flua.org.uk](mailto:fenman@flua.org.uk)

## Issue 2/2011

*We seek the best for users from the fast-changing railway scene by working with all parties in the railway industry and with other relevant bodies in the lead-up to the projected introduction of the Intercity Express Programme and its operation on the Fen Line.*

**“I am as constant as the northern star,”** said Julius Caesar in Shakespeare’s play. And all those centuries ago, the real-life Caesar, whose own memoirs are silent about railways, headed up that Rome-based organisation SPQR (trading as ‘Pax Romana’) which so understood the political and economic significance of good strategic communications networks. We think that, had he still been in charge, Caesar too would have approved of Fen Line inclusion in the ‘IEP’ Intercity Express Programme.

Yes, constancy *is* a vital ingredient when it comes to long-term planning! But isn’t it easy to feel we are anything but constant? What has happened to our expected future - Thameslink?

Well, Thameslink has slowly evolved away from its express elements towards a more ‘suburban’ system, stoppers and semi-fasts. Its strong points – penetration into central London and airport access – have become outweighed by slower journey times and shorter-distance suburban rolling stock.

Five years ago, the then government issued a Planning Assessment in which the Fen Line was recognised as an integral part of the East Coast Main Line. From that start, the Intercity Express Programme has included the Fen Line.

**And now, Secretary of State for Transport Theresa Villiers has personally made the government’s commitment to King’s Lynn-King’s Cross Intercity Express trains: ‘fast’ Cambridge-King’s Cross, superior acceleration, 125 mph running...**

Context is everything – page 3.

### In this issue

- Fen Line metrics May 2011 page 2
- Context is everything page 3
- Being mechanical page 4
- Lady in the Luggage Rack page 4

### No fellow in the firmament

The Intercity Express Programme – IEP – has had much scrutiny and it too has evolved.

**King’s Lynn-King’s Cross IEP has passed all the tests of successive governments.**

As with anything, it’s not all pluses, of course.

The new trains won’t be in service until 2018 and their configuration is such that they may struggle to deal quickly with Fen Line morning peak flows into - and evening flows out of - Cambridge.

Indeed, we wonder if additional services won’t be needed, perhaps Thameslink ones!

**But extra seats, extra speed, extra quality: all lead us to conclude that IEP is the right choice for the Fen Line.**

*We welcome the government’s firm commitment to Fen Line IEP.*

**Now to today’s issues – turn the page!**

### THE FEN LINE



USERS ASSOCIATION

### Contacting FLUA

**Colin Sampson, Chairman**

Tel: (01366) 388003

or reach FLUA on:

e-mail: [fluasecretary@flua.org.uk](mailto:fluasecretary@flua.org.uk)

**Andy Tyler, Secretary**

67 Goodwins Road

KING’S LYNN, Norfolk, PE30 5PE

Tel: 07803 459 043

**John Legg, Treasurer**

**Robert Stripe, Vice-Chairman**

## The Fenman Issue 2/2011

### Mondays-Fridays Fen Line timetable metrics May 2011

To King's Cross	King's Lynn KLN	Watlington WTG	Downham Mkt DOW	Littleport LTP	Ely ELY	Waterbeach WBC
First arrival at King's Cross	0638	0638	0638	0638	0638	0638
No of arrivals at King's Cross <b>0700-0959</b>	6(2)	6(2)	6(2)	6(2)	7(2)	6(2)
No of arrivals at Cambridge <b>0700-0959</b>	6	6	6	6	9	7
No of departures towards London	23(2)	23(2)	23(2)	23(2)	28(4)	25(3)
No of departures towards London <b>1600-1859</b>	3	4	4	4	5	5
Last southbound departure	2228	2234	2241	2250	2258	2307
Average journey times to King's Cross. <b>a.m. peak (mins)</b>	111	104	97	88	82	70
Specimen journey time to King's Cross <b>off-peak (mins)</b>	98	91	85	76	68	59

From King's Cross	King's Lynn KLN	Watlington WTG	Downham Mkt DOW	Littleport LTP	Ely ELY	Waterbeach WBC
No of departures from King's Cross <b>1600-1859</b>	5(1)	5(2)	5(1)	5(2)	6(1)	6(3)
Last departure from King's Cross <small>See Note (7)</small>	2215	2215	2215	2215	2315	2315
No of departures from Cambridge <b>1600-1859</b>	4	4	5	5	8	7
No of northbound arrivals <small>See Note (7)</small>	25(3)	24(3)	26(3)	25(3)	32(4)	29(4)
First northbound arrival	0709	0700	0654	0640	0633	0624
No of northbound arrivals <b>0700-0959</b>	5	5	4	4	6	5
Average journey time from Kings Cross <b>p.m. peak (mins)</b>	102	97	88	82	69	66
Specimen journey time from King's Cross <b>off-peak (mins)</b>	95	85	79	69	63	54

**Notes** - (1) Fen Line Timetable Metrics should be used for broad comparison purposes only. (2) Minor changes may not always be significant for individual passengers. (3) Brackets show change of trains required, usually from/to King's Lynn-Liverpool Street route trains. (4) Except where the context requires it, not all services included are to/from London, e.g. early morning Cambridge-King's Lynn services. (5) Not all services included. The principal exclusions are Ely-Cambridge diesel services (these can provide additional journey opportunities). (6) Caution should be exercised in using time-band counts; a change of plus or minus one minute between timetables can modify the counts without significant change having taken place. (7) For all Fen Line stations, last departure from King's Cross on Fridays is 2315, with one additional northbound arrival at LTP, DOW, WTG and KLN. (8) Timetable metrics from August 1992 (Fen Line electrification) are available on request.

### Mondays-Fridays Fen Line peak services May 2011

23 May 2011 – 9 December 2011

Not all services shown.

Check before travelling.

	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23					
<b>Morning</b>	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	FCC					
King's Lynn	0456	0519	-	0551	0618	-	0651	-	-	0718	-	0754					
Watlington	0503	0526	-	0558	0625	-	0658	-	-	0725	-	0801					
Downham Market	0509	0533	-	0604	0632	-	0704	-	-	0731	-	0807					
Littleport	0518	0542	-	0613	0641	-	0713	-	-	0740	-	0816					
Ely	0526	0552	-	0621	0650	0647	0721	0730	-	0748	0802	0825					
Waterbeach	0535	0601	-	0631	0659	-	0731	-	-	0758	0811	0834					
Cambridge	0544	0610	>	0615	0639	0708	>	0715	0739	0747	>	0755	0806	0820	0843		
Liverpool Street	-	0734	-	-	0834	-	-	0919	-	-	-	0949	-	-			
King's Cross	0638	-	0715	0742	-	0806	0839	-	0902	0910	-	0943					
<b>Morning</b>	FCC	FCC	FCC	FCC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
King's Lynn	0827	0859	0959	1056	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Watlington	0834	0906	1006	1103	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Downham Market	0840	0912	1012	1109	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Littleport	0849	0921	1021	1118	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Ely	0857	0929	1029	1126	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Waterbeach	0907	0938	1038	1135	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Cambridge	0915	0947	1047	1144	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Liverpool Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
King's Cross	1015	1046	1144	1235	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
<b>Evening</b>	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	FCC	NXEA	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	NXEA	FCC					
King's Cross	1515	-	-	1544	1614	-	-	1644	1714	-	-	1744					
Liverpool Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	1558	-	-	1658	-	-					
Cambridge	1602	>	1612	>	1615	1639	1701	>	1712	>	1722	1739	1804	>	1814	1824	1839
Waterbeach	-	-	1621	1645	-	-	1728	1745	-	1820	1830	1845					
Ely	-	1627	1630	1656	-	1727	1738	>	1756	1819	>	1830	1840	1856			
Littleport	-	-	1637	1703	-	-	-	-	1803	-	1837	1903					
Downham Market	-	-	1647	1712	-	-	-	-	1812	-	1847	1912					
Watlington	-	-	-	1718	-	-	-	-	1818	-	1853	1918					
King's Lynn	-	-	-	1728	-	-	-	-	1828	-	1905	1928					
<b>Evening</b>	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	FCC	FCC	NXEA	FCC	-					
King's Cross	1814	-	1844	1915	-	1945	2015	2045	2115	2215	2315	-					
Liverpool Street	-	1758	-	-	1858	-	-	-	-	-	-	-					
Cambridge	1908	>	1919	1939	2008	>	2015	2040	2111	2135	2208	2308	0013	-			
Waterbeach	-	1925	1945	-	2021	2047	2117	2141	2214	2314	2314	0019	-				
Ely	1922	>	1935	1956	-	2031	2056	2126	2153	2223	2323	0029	-				
Littleport	-	1942	2003	-	2038	2103	2133	2200	2230	2330	0036FO	-					
Downham Market	1937	>	1952	2012	-	2047	2112	2142	2209	2239	2339	0045FO	-				
Watlington	-	1958	2018	-	2053	2118	2148	2215	2245	2345	0050FO	-					
King's Lynn	1952	2010	2028	-	2105	2127	2157	2224	2254	2354	0100FO	-					

## **Context is everything**

YOU MIGHT NOT want to start from here if you want to get to there, but here is where we are (with the Fen Line going from strength to strength) and over there is the answer to our growth and capacity issues (the Intercity Express Programme - IEP) seven years down the line!

**Of course, budgeting, specifying, designing, evaluating, ordering, delivering and commissioning a completely new type of train and its infrastructure is far from a trivial task. The government has confirmed Agility Trains (Hitachi and John Laing) as 'preferred bidder'; signing of contracts is the expected next step.**

Meanwhile usage on the Fen Line, part of the DfT's 'core' network and a 'conventional route' in the EU Trans European Network - Transport system, has rocketed: 2.2 million users in 2002/3, 3.2 million – an extra million – in 2009/10. True, growth levelled last year in line with national figures, though King's Lynn's extra 1.5% throughput bucked the trend.

We've already seen trains strengthened to 12-cars south of Cambridge, but what else might we expect on the journey from here to there? Leaving aside the ever-expected 'unknowns', let's take a look at the near future:

Work is already underway on a new 12-car island platform and footbridge at Cambridge.

Ongoing too is the upgrading of an additional track between Alexandra Palace and Finsbury Park for more train capacity into King's Cross.

A new NXEA class 379 train will be on at least one King's Lynn service from the summer.

Approval has been given to build a new flyover and a mile of new railway at Hitchin, "bringing quicker and more reliable journeys on the line to Cambridge and King's Lynn," says NR East Coast Route Director **Richard Lungmuss**.

And his colleague, Anglia Route Director **Andrew Munden**, confirms that an enlarged ticket hall for Cambridge is to be created as part of a recent £4.5 million deal with Brookgate, developers of the adjacent 'CB1' development.

Though FCC's franchise runs until March 2015, the Greater Anglia franchise, currently operated by NXEA, ends next year. A short-term franchise will operate from 5 February 2012 until 20 July 2013 (Dutch Railways, Go-Ahead, and Stagecoach have been shortlisted) after which a long term franchise, expected to last for 15 years, will start.

**Then, from 2018, King's Lynn-King's Cross IEP. Oh, and talking of starting, isn't that where we came in?**

## **Fenliner**

### **The sorry saga of the Downham Market barrow crossing has come to an inevitable end.**

From what I have read and heard about it saddens me because seems obvious that most of the public still do not appreciate the scale of the problem and the enormous pressure facing Network Rail to solve it. I hope the contractors' work on the improvements to the road level crossing is completed long before the darker nights come.

**The public anger should be directed at the idiots who misused the barrow crossing and not at Network Rail for finally removing it. Perhaps the press and media should give a bit more publicity to the other side of the argument.**

Good news about the increase in passengers on the railway, even if there is a bit of overcrowding. It keeps the pressure on the case for more and longer trains all over the country not just here on the Fen Line. It might even make the case for doubling our single line stretches and, who knows, one day even justify restoring a rail link to Hunstanton....! Now that really would be something!

More news is the new sand train which now makes three freight trains using the line. Not sure if FCC and NXEA timetable planners would see that in the same light as an old trainspotter does, though,

Shame about the demise of proper breakfasts on the big bit of the East Coast Main Line, just when I thought I might travel north to sample one again. I saw a picture of the replacement meal which looked all right but I reckon some healthy-diet freak has "got at" our one-time MD, Elaine Holt. No offence intended, Elaine, but there is only one sort of fry-up worthy of the name!

New timetable soon with a brand new unit and additional trains for us at busy times -

**thank you FCC and NXEA,  
every little improvement helps.**

Happy travelling!

**Fenliner is on the Fen Line most days,  
and uses Downham Market station.**

News and views, please, to:

**fenliner@flua.org.uk**

## The Fenman Issue 2/2011

### Being mechanical

THOSE who like their Shakespeare in large helpings will know - "you ought not to walk."

Nobody's been forced to walk yet, as far as we know, but the crowding northwards from Cambridge in the afternoons is getting more and more of an issue.

We welcome the extension of FCC's schools relief as far as Downham Market - though, because of pathing problems, it must leave Cambridge at 1615, causing concerns that the scholars will have to run.

And from 1700 onwards, Cambridge is a heaving mass as seemingly everybody heads back home.

We very much need the NXEA 1722 Cambridge-Ely extended northwards to relieve the 1739 (1644 King's Cross-King's Lynn) as far as Littleport and Downham at least, but the infrastructure is inadequate to allow this.

In a year and a half or so, Microsoft's new HQ is to be opened next to Cambridge station, as part of 'CB1'.

**That might finally cause overcrowding to reach breaking point!**

[www.brookgate.eu/index.php?/projects/cb1](http://www.brookgate.eu/index.php?/projects/cb1)

### Downham Market barrow crossing

WE REGRET the crossing closure on Monday 9 May 2011. Regular misuse has been filmed and a recent incident has been described by some as "a near hit," and by others as "almost another Elsenham."

### Major incident alert!

LEVEL CROSSINGS are the biggest source of risk to rail users - again, filmed evidence for serious abuse of crossings on the line exists. But the tragic accident at Kiln Lane, Ely on Sunday 6 March isn't included amongst the tapes.

That Sunday a car with four people in it broke down on the crossing and was hit by a passenger train. The train driver was injured, as were three track workers.

The good news is at Ely it was a *practice* for the emergency services. The even better news is that there are people on call, night and day, ready to help - we salute them all.

### Level crossing gridlock

THEN a train broke down - right across Tennyson Avenue crossing in Lynn. That was on Thursday 31 March and the resultant road traffic jams were described as "gridlock." Thanks to **George Chappell** for tipping us off, not to mention a certain **Andy Tyler**, who wanted to catch the return service!

### Express buses

THERE have been several occasions recently when the line has been closed for engineering work between Ely and Waterbeach. Running trains to and from Waterbeach from the south and having non stop buses between Ely and Cambridge has been a welcome, passenger friendly way of dealing with the main passenger flows.

Join us from only £4.50 a year! FLUA Membership, 67 Goodwins Road, KING'S LYNN, Norfolk, PE30 5PE or [www.flua.org.uk/membership](http://www.flua.org.uk/membership)

Since we have introduced Corporate Membership, our scope now includes commercial and industrial companies, property developers, estate agents and many other bodies and organisations interested in the Fen Line.

## Lady in the Luggage Rack

by Mawrenna Gleid

"Don't wish your life away," my friend told me at 1630 on one dull Friday, as the slowest half-hour of the working week ticked by. "You'll regret it when the time's gone."

I can see her point, but we all have times when we'd like to skip ahead to the future. The regular commuters I know fit into four main groups, depending on their attitude towards travelling. See if you can spot them all on *your* journey:

The *Workaholic* carries his job with him. No train is too crowded or noisy to produce his laptop and mobile. Every minute is an opportunity seized, and the rest of the carriage enjoys a one-sided discussion of the problems his team faces. I often wonder just how much information the *Workaholic's* competitors could pick up from merely sitting in the same carriage as him.

The *Chatterbox* is always found twittering in groups. Even if forced to sit apart, conversation will continue around, over and between those unlucky enough to be caught in the middle of the flock. If you ever see a lone Chatterbox: flee. She will happily start a conversation with a complete stranger, and you'll be stuck admiring photos of her nieces all the way home.

The *Hobbyist* is a practical soul, who treats the carriage as an enlarged version of their own living room. Train time is leisure time: he will watch movies on his phone or do the crossword; she will bird-watch or pull out her Kindle. Over time, most commuters become Hobbyists. Chatterboxes run out of words, and Workaholics are worn down by the daily grind.

And type four? The *Sloth*. Some of us (me included) simply sleep the journey away. **It's the closest I've ever found to a fast-forward button to the future!**

*King's Lynn resident Mawrenna is a regular on the Cambridge Run.*

### Ten Years Ago

**FLUA had pushed successfully for a relief Cambridge-Ely train, leaving Cambridge about 1720. But, as we said, "even with this extra service, try getting on the 1738 Cambridge-Lynn."**

### Constant as ever

WE HAVE Fen Line timetable metrics going back as far as August 1992, when the line was electrified. They give us a *constant* measure, against which we can analyse change. Taken together with the May 2011 peak service also set out on page 2, you can see how that half-hourly peak service to/from King's Cross is maintained, with NXEA supplying the 'missing' connections. We'll continue monitoring facts!

**FLUA diary 2011**  
**Saturday 26 November**  
AGM, King's Lynn.