

The Fenman

Newsletter of the Fen Line Users Association

www.flua.org.uk

fenman@flua.org.uk

Issue 4/2011

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 (IEP) and its operation on the Fen Line.**

“The square root of half a number of bees, and also eight-ninths of the whole...” We’re quoting the poet Longfellow here, not expecting you to solve equations, though equations pretty much sum up the complexity required to plan and run a railway! Rail Minister **Theresa Villiers** will have much business affecting the Fen Line to impart to new Secretary of State for Transport **Justine Greening**, not least *IEP* (the Intercity Express Programme) and NR’s King’s Lynn to Cambridge Capacity Study.

Much of the work to get the best out of IEP is under way, or is soon to start – more tracks into the redeveloped King’s Cross station, ECML power upgrade, Hitchin flyover, new through platforms at Cambridge – but north of Cambridge, there is some more to do!

And, like Longfellow’s “equation,” it’s complicated. The professionals have to solve mind-boggling problems in construction, timetabling and operations, as well as in economics and finance - simultaneously. So, what are *they* saying?

M.P.s Elizabeth Truss and Stephen Barclay have been told by Network Rail that its Capacity Study work shows that the bottleneck standing in the way of half-hourly services on the line, is to be found somewhere we usually pass through without a second glance - Ely North Junction.

Though more study must be carried out to assess all the implications of widening Ely North Junction to permit half-hourly Fen Line services, the M.P.s have been told that a positive business case can be made.

Ships that pass in the night – page 3.

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Annual General Meeting

Saturday 26 November 2011
at the Good News Centre, St. John’s Church,
King’s Lynn at 2 p.m.

Turn left outside station – the church is in front of you
(use main entrance facing the parking area).

Our guest speaker will be

Paul Gray

British Transport Police

As usual, we have invited rail management to answer members’ questions.

Andy Tyler, Secretary 1 November 2011

Initial Industry Plan September 2011

Rail industry proposals for 2014-2019 and beyond.

England and Wales Plan, pages 69 and 76:

“Additional services on the King’s Lynn line”

IEP on “the East Coast Main Line [ECML]
(including the King’s Lynn via Cambridge route)”

<http://www.networkrail.co.uk/IIP.aspx>

<http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/pr13/>

THE FEN LINE



USERS ASSOCIATION

Contacting FLUA

Colin Sampson, Chairman

Tel: (01366) 388003

or reach FLUA on:

e-mail: 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

Mondays-Fridays Fen Line timetable metrics December 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 0700-0959	6(2)	6(2)	6(2)	6(2)	7(3)	6(2)
No of arrivals at Cambridge 0700-0959	6	6	6	6	10	7
No of departures towards London	23(2)	23(2)	24(2)	23(2)	30(4)	25(3)
No of departures towards London 1600-1859	3	4	5	4	6	5
Last southbound departure	2228	2235	2241	2250	2258	2307
Average journey times to King's Cross. a.m. peak (mins)	109	103	96	88	82	70
Specimen journey time to King's Cross off-peak (mins)	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 1600-1859	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 1600-1859	4	4	5	4	8	7
No of northbound arrivals <small>See Note (7)</small>	25(3)	24(3)	26(3)	24(3)	33(4)	29(4)
First northbound arrival	0709	0659	0652	0640	0633	0624
No of northbound arrivals 0700-0959	5	4	4	4	6	4
Average journey time from Kings Cross p.m. peak (mins)	105	98	88	82	72	66
Specimen journey time from King's Cross off-peak (mins)	95	85	79	70	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 most 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, creating one additional northbound arrival at LTP, DOW, WTG and KLN. (8) Timetable metrics from August 1992 (Fen Line electrification) to date are available on request.

Mondays-Fridays Fen Line peak services December 2011

12 December 2011 - 7 December 2012 (Twelve months)

Not all services shown.

Source: National Rail Enquiries. Correct at time of compilation. Check before travelling!

	1	3	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19A	19B	21
Morning	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	FCC	NXEA
King's Lynn	0456	0519	-	0551	0617	-	0651	-	-	-	0725	-
Watlington	0503	0526	-	0558	0624	-	0658	-	-	-	0732	-
Downham Market	0509	0533	-	0604	0631	-	0704	-	-	-	0738	-
Littleport	0518	0542	-	0613	0640	-	0713	-	-	-	0747	-
Ely	0526	0552	-	0621	0650	0647	0721	0730	-	0748	0756	0802
Waterbeach	0535	0601	-	0631	0659	-	0731	-	-	0757	-	0811
Cambridge	0544	0610	>	0615	0639	0708	>	0715	0739	0747	>	0755
Liverpool Street	-	0725	-	-	0825	-	-	0920	-	-	-	0812
King's Cross	0638	-	0715	0739	-	0807	0839	-	0902	0909	0909	0950
	23	25	27	29	31							
Morning	FCC	FCC	FCC	FCC	FCC							
King's Lynn	0755	0827	0859	0959	1056							
Watlington	0802	0834	0906	1006	1103							
Downham Market	0808	0840	0912	1012	1109							
Littleport	0817	0849	0921	1021	1118							
Ely	0826	0857	0929	1029	1126							
Waterbeach	0836	0907	0938	1038	1135							
Cambridge	0845	0915	0947	1047	1144							
Liverpool Street	-	-	-	-	-							
King's Cross	0944	1014	1046	1144	1235							
	2	4D	6	8	10	12D	14	16	18	20	22	24
Evening	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	FCC	NXEA	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	NXEA	FCC
King's Cross	1515	-	-	1544	1614	-	-	1644	1714	-	-	1744
Liverpool Street	-	-	-	-	-	-	1558	-	-	1707	-	-
Cambridge	1603	>	1612	>	1621	1639	1701	>	1712	>	1722	1739
Waterbeach	-	-	1627	1645	-	-	1728	1745	-	1803	>	1817
Ely	-	1626	1636	1655	-	1726	1738	>	1755	1819	>	1832
Littleport	-	-	-	1702	-	-	-	-	1803	-	-	1840
Downham Market	-	-	1650	1711	-	-	-	-	1812	-	-	1849
Watlington	-	-	-	1717	-	-	-	-	1818	-	-	1856
King's Lynn	-	-	-	1726	-	-	-	-	1828	-	-	1908
	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48
Evening	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	NXEA	FCC	FCC	FCC	FCC	FCC	FCC	FCC
King's Cross	1814	-	1844	1915	-	1945	2015	2045	2115	2145	2215	2315
Liverpool Street	-	1807	-	-	1907	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Cambridge	1908	>	1919	1939	2007	>	2015	2040	2110	2138	2208	2308
Waterbeach	-	1925	1945	-	2021	2046	2116	2144	2214	2244	2308	0014
Ely	1923	>	1934	1955	-	2030	2055	2125	2153	2223	2254	2323
Littleport	-	1942	2003	-	2038	2102	2132	2200	2230	-	-	2330
Downham Market	1938	>	1951	2012	-	2047	2111	2141	2209	2239	-	2339
Watlington	-	1958	2018	-	2054	2117	2147	2215	2245	-	-	2345
King's Lynn	1953	2010	2028	-	2105	2126	2156	2224	2254	-	-	2354
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Ships that pass in the night

IMAGINE we're on a journey from King's Lynn to King's Cross. The line is double as we leave Littleport, River Ouse to the left, pretty straight and pretty level. Indeed this is *the* Great Level that the Dutchman **Sir Cornelius Vermuyden** improved around the time of the Civil War; his family motto "Niet zonder arbyt" is not only to be discovered in window glass at Ely Cathedral (the Ship of the Fens) but is also the motto of South Cambridgeshire (wherein lies Waterbeach station) Council.

We leave Littleport, glide over the Great Catchwater Drain viaduct, speed two miles further south and now we can see the Peterborough line converging; then, in comes the Norwich line, all meeting at Ely North Junction. Why a bottleneck at that Junction?

It's a complicated series of single lines. All Lynn trains and all Norwich trains - in both directions - have to pass over a small section of single track.

Let's pretend our journey is on the 1056 from Lynn. Just north of Downham, at 1108, we passed the northbound 0945 King's Cross-King's Lynn. We are over Ely North Junction about 1123. At 1137, just south of Waterbeach, we pass the next northbound Lynn train (the 1045 from King's Cross). That's a 29 *minute interval* between the two Lynn-bound trains.

Still in our imagination, now let's 'extend' the 1015 King's Cross-Cambridge northwards, right through to Lynn. When would we pass *that*? Equation solution coming up – first round that 29 minutes interval to a full half hour, then *half* it. Answer 15 minutes.

Given that we passed northbound Lynn services at 1108 and at 1137, we would pass the 'extended' Cambridge train 15 minutes *after* 1108 or, if you like, 15 minutes *before* 1137, that is at 1122 or 1123.

And exactly where would our 1056 from Lynn pass that 'extended' Cambridge train at 1122 or 1123? At Ely North Junction, of course - but you'd already realised that, hadn't you?

Ouch! Two trains at the same time on the same little bit of single track! It's impossible! Therein is revealed the reason why the single line at Ely North Junction is blocking the way to more Fen Line trains.

The IEP timetable, due from December 2018, could alter details – so too would stopping at any new Cambridge Science Park station. But, with a half-hourly frequency, trains would still pass each other about *every fifteen minutes* - on double track!

One more equation: simply project train times on the double section between Watlington and Downham 15 minutes southwards. You get another crossing section between Littleport and a point just north of Ely station, that is including the bottleneck at Ely North Junction. *That's* where capacity creating investment needs to go.

Agreed, equations are hard. Still, "Niet zonder arbyt." That's "Nothing without work"!

The Fenman Interview

Julian Litten

Home station: King's Lynn

JL: My home station is King's Lynn. In fact, it's only a matter of ten minutes walk from my front door and part of my footfall takes me through the elegant Edwardian (1902) St James's Park, known for its formal planting.

➤ *How often do you use the Fen Line?*

JL: Twice a week is my usual usage of the Fen Line, sometimes direct to London or changing at Ely to go west or east. Most of my trips are associated with voluntary work as I sit on some twenty-five national committees and councils, which leaves me with little time to do much else.

➤ *Where do you travel and why?*

JL: Next week, for example, I'll be making three journeys on the Fen Line. First to Ely on cathedral business, then to Norwich cathedral, related to business of the Fabric Advisory Committee I chair. The Westminster trip is to chair a meeting of the Society of the Faith, of which organisation I am Principal.

➤ *What's the service's worst aspect?*

JL: Probably the worst aspect of my travel is the journey to Bury St Edmunds, a journey I take every other month to attend meetings of its cathedral Fabric Advisory Committee. Why there has to be a gap of fifty-seven minutes at Ely is beyond comprehension; surely the Ipswich train could be held for four minutes? And it's the same coming back! Many's the time my Bury St Edmunds train pulls in to Platform 3 at Ely as the doors of the Ely to King's Lynn train on Platform 1 are closing.

➤ *What's its best point?*

JL: Of course, for all of this, the service to London is brilliant. Indeed, the under 100 minute run is the one of the three reasons why I selected King's Lynn as a town to retire to.

➤ *What's needed the most? Why?*

JL: I think what is needed most is consultation between rail networks to reduce long waits at Ely. Also, there needs to be more time given at King's Cross in putting up the platform number. So often this does not happen until five minutes before the train is due to leave, which leads to what I call the Lemming Run, where hundreds of commuters make a marathon dash for the train, pushing us oldies out of the way!

➤ *Anything else you'd like to say?*

JL: What I do miss is the tea trolley between Cambridge and King's Cross. And what a pity there is not a Quiet Carriage, where one can escape those *ghastly* laptops, mobile phones and prehensile-thumbed texters!

➤ *Finally, is FLUA worthwhile?*

JL: FLUA is probably the best part of the Fen Line. During my wait on King's Lynn or Ely stations I take the opportunity to read about what's happening and what is planned to happen. In fact, next to the train, it's the most useful part of the Fen Line.

'Lemming Run' - seems it's now becoming a thing of the past!

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

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Welkom in de trein

On 5 February 2012 Abellio Greater Anglia (owned by NS Dutch Railways) will be taking over the Liverpool Street based franchise from NXEA.

A word of appreciation to all at NXEA who made it work, day in day out – the new 379s for King's Lynn/Ely to Liverpool Street services will be your lasting mark!

The new Abellio franchise will run until July 2014 (The current FCC franchise will run until September 2013).

www.abellio.com/pers/?key=100000112&template=uk-pressreleases1&persitem=&pid=52

Level crossings

On Tuesday 5 July, a camper van ran into the side of a train at the A10 Littleport Bypass crossing. On Sunday 25 September there was a collision between the 1010 King's Lynn-Ely and a tractor at Hatson's User Worked Crossing, just south of King's Lynn. The Rail Accident Investigation Board is formally investigating the latter.

www.raib.gov.uk/publications/current_investigations_register/110925_hatsons_uwc.cfm

On the buses

THERE have been other occasions recently (the wires have come down) when replacement buses have been drafted in. Buses have also been substituted during planned engineering works. Surprisingly perhaps, reports have varied greatly – criticism of southbound buses turning up at Waterbeach already full vying with praise for 'fast' buses between Ely and Lynn running alongside 'all stations' stoppers.

Dry work

LACK of rain has meant ground shifting and a consequent misalignment of wire and track between Downham and Littleport, hence reduced speeds. NR engineering operations are planned on Sundays 20, 27 November and 4 December.

Car parking

PRIVATE enterprise has been vigorous on the Fen Line, with no fewer than *four* of our six stations having some form of car parking supplementing that provided by FCC or NXEA and offering competitive rates. The latest is Lynn's 'overspill' site.

End of the line

FARE-DODGERS beware! We support ticket gates, such as are coming to Lynn (we pushed to retain direct passenger access to the taxi rank, in the end without success).

<http://online.west-norfolk.gov.uk/online-applications/applicationDetails.do?activeTab=documents&keyVaI=LSMTGLIV39000>

Bus stops moved

NOTE that the bus stops at Cambridge station for buses towards Addenbrookes Hospital have been relocated (turn left on leaving the booking hall). City-bound stops are unchanged.

IEP update

"The Department [of Transport] and the banks that will lend to the Intercity Express Programme began their review of the contract with Agility Trains [Hitachi and John Laing consortium] in September 2011. This is part of the remaining work needed to finalise the deal for the new trains... The Department hopes to finalise the commercial terms of the deal with Agility by the new year."

www.dft.gov.uk/topics/iep

*There's a DfT presentation about IEP at -
<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/intercity-rail-travel-presentation/intercity-rail-travel-presentation.pdf>*

Lady in the Luggage Rack

by Mawrenna Gleid

So, even on the railways, things change. Have you seen the new white trains? For weeks they sidled about, silent on their own mysterious business. 'Oh look,' we'd say, 'the white train!' And everyone's head would turn.

When one took over the 1722 Cambridge to Ely service, we all left work early and took a trip. And it was great: quiet, clean, spacious and smooth-running.

Of course, they'll only be doing National Express duties, but my friends on the 1814 Cambridge to Lynn can't wait. These sleek new trains will make an enormous change from the battered rattletraps shuddering their way to the end of the line.

Which leads me on to Cambridge's new platform and footbridge. Standing on platform 4a I was struck by the change to the skyline: Cambridge looks more like a major interchange now. Perhaps this is just the beginning: other platforms may come in time.

But only if the customers come too. I don't really want to talk about ticket pricing, but I will say this: commuters are the beating heart of the line. We are the financial foundation all the special offers are built upon. And for most of us, this is a choice we make: a choice we could revoke.

This goes out to everyone who has stood on Ely station in the snow, wondering when or if they will get to work. Everyone who has stood up all the way home. Everyone who has done these things every day for a week, or a month, and renewed their season ticket *anyway*.

So enjoy the improvements: we deserve them. Fellow-commuters, I salute you.

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

The 1814 from Cambridge (1658 Liverpool Street-Lynn) is currently operated by class 317 trains from the 1980s.

Ten Years Ago

Fen Line services were still bedevilled by the aftermath of the Hatfield accident. But there was some comfort: "Because of the lousy performance recently, certain fares have been going the right way for once. Downham-London weekly seasons," we reported, "are down by about 10%."

Flying Dutchman

IF you can't get enough Dutch and you can't wait a couple of years for DB's and Eurostar's projected St. Pancras-Amsterdam services to start, here's a reminder of NXEA's *DutchFlyer* inclusive rail & sea fares to rail destinations in Holland, via Harwich-Hoek van Holland. Tot ziens! www.nationalexpresseastanglia.com/offers/dutchflyer

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