

## **Report of Local Transport Officer: December 2019.**

Before starting this report, I must apologise for any shortcomings in style and presentation. I have suffered a catastrophic failure of my computer systems in the middle of changing machines and operating systems. As of today, I am locked out of all my old data and document files, and am having to learn a new system.

### **Buses:**

The Chairman has already reported on the reintroduction of the solitary Orford - Ipswich service 71, at least as far as Martlesham Park-&-Ride. From the same date (17th November), minor changes to services 70,70A,72 & 972 were made, presumably to release a bus for the 71.

I am not aware of any further changes to our local services being in the pipeline, but release of advance information by both First and Suffolk County Council is very tardy, considering the lengthy period between registration and introduction.

I have been looking at the combined operation of services 63/64 and 65 through Melton and wonder if the parish council would consider supporting my proposal that the 65 operates off-peak (the 71 runs in the peaks) direct from the Chapel to Woodbridge *via* Melton Road, restoring the link lost when the 800 was withdrawn. The time saved by omitting Bredfield Road (which would retain an hourly service) might permit the reintroduction of services *via* Peterhouse Crescent in Woodbridge.

### **Trains:**

New timetables came into effect nationally on Sunday 15th December. Locally, the big news should have been the doubling of Sunday services on the Lowestoft - Ipswich East Suffolk Line. They are now scheduled to run hourly (from 08:08 to 21:08 Melton - Ipswich and from 10:08 to 22:02 from Ipswich).

On the Great Eastern mainline, evening peak service from London have been changed improve local connections from the fast "Norwich in 90" trains. The Norwich - Cambridge service now runs through to Stansted Airport (7 each way on Weekdays, 15 on Saturdays and 13 on Sundays. There are not enough vacant peak-time "paths" south of Cambridge to allow more trains on weekdays.

However, this good news has been overshadowed by the less than flawless introduction of the new train fleet, which has resulted in the number of "late / very late / cancelled" trains increasing from a rather poor 39.5% on 1st December to 75.3% on 10th December, with a low point of 83.9% on 6th December. More detail of what is a developing situation can be found in the attached article in the current issue of RAIL magazine, which arrived in today's post. I have refrained from highlighting any particular sections, but it is perplexing that these new trains have been subject to several months of testing across the network, apparently without any of these problems emerging.

Geof Butterwick  
Local Transport Officer  
16th December 2019



## Southeastern and Transport Police catch 8,500 fare dodgers

A joint operation between Southeastern and British Transport Police to tackle fare evasion over 28 days in late autumn and early winter has resulted in almost 2,000 criminal prosecutions being brought forward and more than 6,500 penalty fares issued.

The operation took place at Chatham, Gillingham, Rochester, Strood, Sittingbourne, Rainham and Gravesend stations, with more than 1,500 penalty fares issued at Chatham and 1,640 at Gillingham.

At the latter, 538 criminal prosecutions were sought.

Some staff were subjected to violent and intimidatory behaviour, and use of body-worn video cameras with swift intervention from the BTP is said to have helped.

Southeastern general manager for revenue, crime and enforcement Siobhan Bradshaw said: "Nobody wants to witness violence or intimidatory behaviour when travelling by train, and no one deserves to be treated that

way at work. We're pulling out all the stops to make sure that no one gets away with hurting our colleagues, who are there to look after and assist our passengers, and ensure that everyone pays their fare.

"There is no excuse whatsoever for criminal behaviour, which includes not paying for a ticket for your journey. Evading the train fare is unfair on everyone - not least honest passengers who don't expect to see their train fare

subsidising people who don't pay."

Bradshaw added: "This was an important operation that also resulted in some really good news stories for the local community - thanks to the eagle eyes of our teams.

"A missing 15-year-old was spotted at Gillingham and taken into police care, while at Chatham a vulnerable dementia sufferer was seen without his carer and was accompanied by his destination to ensure his safety."

# Inquiry into causes of Greater



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INVESTIGATIONS are under way into the cause of mass cancellations on the Greater Anglia rural network.

Services operated by Stadler Class 755 bi-mode trains that began running from July have been cancelled, some at short notice, with GA telling passengers this is due to signalling issues.

RAIL understands that the trains are believed to be interfering with track circuits.

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch (RAIB) has also confirmed it is looking into how a '755' was a quarter of a second away from hitting a car on a level crossing near Norwich, after the barriers were raised when the train (running at 45mph) was 200 metres away. There were no injuries.

Since the incident, at 1953 on November 24, Network Rail has modified the settings at this and similar level crossings on the line to reduce the chance of a repeat occurrence.

Wheels on the new trains are being inspected and cleaned after every passenger trip, while NR has introduced temporary 20mph speed restrictions at all six level crossings on the Norwich-Sheringham line, as well as stationing staff at the crossings.

Network Rail Anglia Route Director Mark Budden said: "The safety of all those who use the railway is our top priority and we take our responsibilities very seriously to ensure safety is maintained. In collaboration with our industry partners we are continuing to investigate what caused the incident at Norwich Road level crossing.

"As RAIB has noted, we have already taken measures to modify



**Above:**The Norwich Road level crossing at Rackheath (near Norwich). This is the location where a Class 755 was a quarter of a second away from hitting a car, after the barriers were raised as the train approached on its way to Sheringham. The '755' was running from right to left. RICHARD CLINNICK.

the crossing barrier equipment in order to prevent a similar incident occurring. We have also imposed a 20mph speed restriction across the six similar crossings on the Norwich-Sheringham line, to ensure the safety of train passengers and all those using the crossings."

"We will continue to work closely with RAIB and consider any recommendations made once the investigation has been completed."

Performance had already been poor (see table) before the train cancellations started on December 6. As this issue of RAIL went to press five days later, the cancellations were continuing.

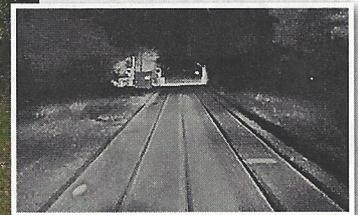
A GA spokesman, on the first day of the mass cancellations, told RAIL: "At this stage the cause of the problem and whether it is linked to any previous issues is unknown. We apologise to customers affected by disruption today. We will assist Network Rail as much

as we can in order to restore the normal rail service as quickly as possible."

Three areas under investigation are the track and signalling, the autumn conditions, and the wheel/track interface on the new trains.

In a joint statement, Budden and

**Below:** Footage from the forward-facing CCTV on-board the Class 755/4 as it approaches Norwich Road level crossing on November 24, where the barriers had raised as the train approached. RAIB.



Greater Anglia Managing Director Jamie Burles said: "Our engineers have been working round the clock to investigate why we are having problems with the track signalling system, which has led to us reducing the number of services we can run.

"We are examining every factor including components of the signalling system, the impact of leaf fall, and the interaction between the signalling system and passenger trains, old and new.

"We both fully appreciate that this situation is extremely frustrating for passengers and it is an absolute priority for us to get these problems resolved as soon as possible. We will provide a further update as soon we have more detail. We plan to restore normal services for our passengers as soon as we can. In the meantime, Greater Anglia is making sure that customers can still complete their journeys."

NR has started running more railhead treatment trains across the region, including on Saturdays and operating two RHTTs across

### Greater Anglia rural lines performance December 1-11 (%)

Date	On-time	Late	Very-late/cancelled
December 1	60.5%	18.4%	21.1%
December 2	63.6%	14.9%	21.5%
December 3	70.7%	14.7%	14.7%
December 4	59.6%	23.0%	17.4%
December 5	68.2%	21.3%	10.5%
December 6	16.1%	18.3%	65.6%
December 7	21.4%	24.1%	54.5%
December 8	29.6%	26.6%	43.8%
December 9	19.7%	33.2%	47.1%
December 10	24.7%	25.1%	50.2%
December 11	25.3%	27.3%	47.5%

Note: Trains deemed very late or cancelled are measured as more than 30 minutes late.

Note: December 11 was until 1125 on RAIL press day.

Source: [trains.im](http://trains.im)

## Carol service for Transport Benevolent Fund

Porterbrook, the Rail Delivery Group, Network Rail and the RSSB (formerly the Rail Safety and Standards Board) are sponsoring the Transport Benevolent Fund's annual Rail Staff Carol Service on December 19, at St Mary's Somers Town on Eversholt Street, near Euston station.

The service starts at 1230 and is led by London's Transport Choir. It features carols and readings, followed by seasonal refreshments. Porterbrook Head of

Communications and Engagement Rupert Brennan-Brown said: "We are delighted to join with industry partners to support the Transport Benevolent Fund's annual Rail Staff Carol service.

"This event brings together the railway family and friends and helps us to remember those among our number who have to work over the Christmas period operating or upgrading the network."

Transport Benevolent Fund Chief Executive John Sheehy added: "We

are most grateful for the support of all our sponsors and the local Somers Town community, all of whom help grow this joyous event year-on-year.

"Proceeds from the service help TBF support its members who, no matter what time of year, find themselves in need.

"The relevance of the fund's work is best illustrated by the volume of awards to members, which over the past 12 months total more than £2.8 million."

# Anglia cancellations



the same route on the same day.

A Stadler spokesman told *RAIL* on December 10: "With support from Stadler and Greater Anglia, Network Rail is leading an in-depth investigation to determine the causes of a number of track circuit operation incidents. We are working closely with our partners to investigate these signalling faults. Short-term measures have already been implemented and further mid-term measures are currently being evaluated by a joint task force.

"The new trains have been subject to industry standard safety checks and authorisation before they were permitted to enter passenger service. They are inspected as part of planned routine exams to ensure that the required safety standards are maintained."

A Stadler source said the problems were unlikely to be linked

**Greater Anglia 755409 arrives at Cambridge on September 27, passing 755422 which was being used for the official launch of the trains on the route to Norwich. Investigations are under way as to why the new trains are understood to be interfering with track circuits.** RICHARD CLINNICK.

to the unit's flange lubricators.

The problems are not affecting the remaining members of GA's 'legacy' fleet (nine Class 156s and one Class 170), although it is understood that a '156' did suffer a slide which is being investigated.

More four-car '755s' have been introduced after five Class 153s and 11 Class 170s moved to Transport for Wales. The '156s' are due to move to East Midlands Railway this year, although that will be a staged release. GA has 18 four-car and one three-car '755s' accepted for passenger traffic, so the rural fleet should have a net gain in terms of trains.

Buses are being laid on in place of cancelled trains. At various times, services were completely

suspended on the Ipswich-Peterborough and Ipswich-Felixstowe route, while a reduced service was introduced on other routes. Norwich-Sheringham services terminated at Cromer, while the Norwich-Cambridge trains terminated at Ely.

GA's plan to accept more three-car '755/3s' has been delayed by the problems. Trial running and commissioning trips, carried out by Rail Operations Group as well as by the operator, have also been cancelled while investigations continue.

It also puts into doubt the introduction of the 12-car Class 745 Stadler electric multiple units, which are very similar to the BMUs. [@Clinnick1](https://twitter.com/Clinnick1)

## "Quote...

**// Perhaps the Avanti reference is in relation to Pass Go - Collect £200 in Monopoly, as heads or tails the privateers always win. //**

MANUEL CORTES

TSSA General Secretary comments on the new West Coast operator's brand launch.

**// There is no excuse to not know the height of your vehicle before starting your journey. //**

SIR PETER HENDY CBE

Network Rail Chairman discusses bridge strikes.



**// We understand that no one wants to pay more to travel, which is why train companies have for the third year in a row held the average fare increases below inflation. //**

PAUL PLUMMER

Rail Delivery Group Chief Executive justifies a fares rise of 2.7%.

**// The rail industry should be doing everything possible to ensure that passengers can get the cheapest fare for their journey. //**

DARREN SHIRLEY

Campaign for Better Transport Chief Executive isn't pleased with the latest fares rise.

**// Travelling by train is my favourite way of getting around the country, but for too long a fragmented and privatised rail system has ripped off passengers. //**

JEREMY CORBYN

Labour leader on his party's pledge to cut rail fares by a third.

**// This demonstrates that campaigning actually works. //**

DENNIS FANCETT

Chairman of South East Northumberland Rail Group welcomes the start of TransPennine Express services to Morpeth, four years after campaigning began.