

Membership Matters

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Branch Committee extends a welcome to all branch members to attend committee meetings as observers. This will be a further opportunity to meet branch members other than at the annual general meeting, and to hear about branch activities and local rail issues.

The committee meetings are usually held at the Saxilby Methodist Church Hall, commencing at 1.00pm. The next two meetings are scheduled for Saturdays, 2 July and 24 September.

GRANTHAM RAIL SHOW

The branch will once again be exhibiting at the Grantham Rail Show model railway exhibition at the Priory Ruskin Academy (formerly known as the Central Technology College), Rushcliffe Road, Grantham NG31 8ED (off the A607 Manthorpe Road to Lincoln). Use the Stagecoach Interconnect Lincoln bus service from the town centre on the Saturday.

This year the show is on Saturday/Sunday 3 and 4 September. Open 10.00am to 5.30pm on the Saturday and 9.30am to 4.30pm on the Sunday.

If anyone can offer a few hours help on either day or has any items of transport interest to donate that we can sell at the show, please contact David Harby.

Editor's Mail

I would like to give a warning to photographers at Skegness station. The other day, I was taking a picture of the Jolly Fisherman there, when, out of the blue, I was threatened by a "lady" – whom I'm guessing might have been a substance abuser – with a private prosecution if I didn't give her my camera. I was accused of taking her picture, and was harangued for several minutes, becoming frightened as a result.

I don't know if such people regularly hang about on Skegness station, but if they do, I'd suggest giving it a wide berth if you're a lone photographer.
Tim Mickleborough, Grimsby.

Rail Lincs 61 will be published in October. Please let the Editor have copy by 17 September.

The views and comments expressed in Rail Lincs are not necessarily those of the Railway Development Society.

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Rail Lincs

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Lincolnshire & South Humberside Branch of the
Railway Development Society

railfuture
L I N C O L N S H I R E
N e w s l e t t e r

From the Chairman

Welcome to the first newsletter after the AGM. I was very pleased to see 25 members at the formal AGM who were joined by 14 members of the public for the afternoon session. Even more pleasing was to recruit a new member from the afternoon session.

On page 4 of this issue, we have reproduced a leaflet about Lincoln – Nottingham services. The need for improvements was one of the issues that was highlighted at the AGM. In a report prepared for Lincolnshire County Council in 2008 it was shown that line speed enhancement and service frequency improvements have a very promising business case. The Lincoln to Nottingham stakeholder board have also identified an extra evening service as one of the 'quick wins' that could be introduced quickly at a relatively modest cost, especially in relation to the £9million that DfT have saved by axing the proposed 2 hourly Lincoln to Kings

Cross service. If we are to get any improvements, we do however need to show DfT that they have strong public support so I urge to you to lobby your MP. I have already sent my letter.

You will see that in the leaflet we are highlighting the potential of Hykeham station as a park and ride site. This will not be something that will happen quickly, but if we are to achieve it as a long term aim we do need to keep the issue in the minds of North Kesteven planners and of Lincolnshire County Council, so that when the nearby properties are redeveloped no planning decisions are made that would prevent a park and ride site in the future.

One platform at Hykeham has already been improved and there is the potential for improvements to the other platform being funded by developers of the adjoining factory site. At the same time we hope that developers and future
continued on page 3

Rail Lincs Number 60,

an excuse to celebrate with a photograph of a Class 60 locomotive near Barnetby. The Class is the mainstay traction on iron ore and coal trains between Immingham and Scunthorpe – the route with the highest tonnage on Britain's rail network.

Photo: Steve Trowsdale,
Grantham Railway Society.



Refer to page 2 for contact details of branch officers mentioned in Rail Lincs.

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SELTA Representative Position vacant

Lincolnshire Station Usage

Alan Gouldthorpe has extracted Lincolnshire stations from national station footfall figures to produce this interesting table of station usage within the Branch area.

Station Name	County or Unitary Authority	Station Facility Owner	0910 Entries & Exits	0809 Entries & Exits
Barton-On-Humber	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	46,428	48,756
Barrow Haven	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	2,168	2,734
New Holland	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	20,490	23,530
Coxhill	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	21,148	22,692
Thornton Abbey	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	1,056	1,102
Ulcaby	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	6,280	7,364
Hebrough	North East Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	25,632	27,640
Stallingborough	North East Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	9,626	9,054
Healing	North East Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	8,562	8,096
Great Coates	North East Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	8,110	9,534
Gainsby Town	North East Lincolnshire	First TransPennine Express	391,982	411,860
Gainsby Docks	North East Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	3,792	5,568
New Clee	North East Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	322	526
Cleethorpes	North East Lincolnshire	First TransPennine Express	204,860	235,626
Barnetby	North Lincolnshire	First TransPennine Express	54,190	60,472
Brigg	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	414	554
Kirton Lindsey	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	220	88
Gainsborough Central	Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	1,438	1,172
Gainsborough Lea Road	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	136,284	118,616
Saxilby	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	55,024	48,966
Lincoln Central	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	1,477,752	1,379,412
Market Rasen	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	57,390	44,254
Scunthorpe	North Lincolnshire	First TransPennine Express	322,882	377,308
Althorpe	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	6,700	8,906
Crowle	North Lincolnshire	Northern Rail	22,496	27,940
Hykeham	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	23,262	21,162
Collingham	Nottinghamshire	East Midlands Trains	46,548	31,772
Newark North Gate	Nottinghamshire	East Coast	924,528	960,948
Newark Castle	Nottinghamshire	East Midlands Trains	413,900	345,128
Metheringham	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	98,722	107,090
Ruskington	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	80,838	92,412
Sleaford	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	316,894	318,766
Grantham	Lincolnshire	East Coast	1,033,374	1,054,634
Stamford	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	287,638	296,702
Ancaster	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	3,764	4,652
Rauceby	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	1,970	1,788
Spalding	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	197,072	186,394
Hedkington	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	55,022	54,678
Swineshead	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	1,312	1,028
Hubberts Bridge	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	296	558
Boston	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	205,046	198,898
Thorpe Quiver	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	382	960
Wainfleet	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	67,960	64,186
Havenhouse	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	378	328
Skegness	Lincolnshire	East Midlands Trains	359,202	360,636

Charter Trains from Lincolnshire

Both charter trains mentioned in *Rail Lincs 59* experienced problems. On 2 May, the Railtourer Channel Coast charter, top and tailed by a pair of Class 47 diesels failed at Billingham on the outward journey and was delayed for an hour whilst attempts were made to rectify a fault on the leading locomotive; then get permission from Network Rail to propel the train using the rear locomotive. Arrival at the destinations of Arundel and Chichester was over an hour late, but fortunately, the organisers were able to arrange for the return to depart an hour later than scheduled. Interestingly, arrival at Grantham was only about 20 minutes later than the original timings, which

included generous recovery minutes. The train was originally scheduled to terminate at Boston with Skegness passengers being transferred by bus, but because of late running terminated at Sleaford.

Earlier, on 9 April, the well publicised steam special "The Jolly Fisherman" from Kings Cross to Skegness had its share of problems when locomotive 70013 Oliver Cromwell developed a fault whilst working on the Joint Line. Instead of working tender first from Sleaford to Skegness, the train was hauled by a Class 37 diesel, which was already attached to the rear. The diesel then hauled the complete consist back to Kings Cross via Grantham and the East Coast Main Line.

Member, Geoff Meanwell has compiled the following list of charter trains to and from the Lincolnshire area (subject to changes)

Saturday, 7 July

Circular tour from Lincoln (diesel) *Northern Belle*

Saturday, 30 July

Lincoln to Ravenglass, (diesel/steam) *Rail Blue Charters*

Thursday, 25 August

Peterborough/Retford to Manchester (Tornado) *Steam Dreams*

Thursday, 15 September

Kings Cross to Lincoln (Tornado) *Steam Dreams*

Friday, 16 September

Lincoln to Rochester (diesel) *Northern Belle*

Saturday, 17 September

St. Pancras to Skegness (HST) *UK Railtours*

Wednesday, 28 September

Skegness, Wainfleet, Boston, Heckington, Sleaford and Grantham to Scarborough via York, return via Wolds Coast line (diesel/steam) *Railtourer*

Saturday, 8 October

Grantham/Newark to Carlisle (diesel/ steam 46115) *RTC*

Saturday, 3 December

Newark/Grantham to Canterbury (Class 47) *Railtourer*

Kings Cross to Lincoln (60007) *RTC*

Charters operated by Railtourer Ltd, Hull, can be booked through local agent, Carolyn Sharp (see page 2 for contact details) (GM)

occupants of the nearby Teal Park site are also asked to contribute to improvements at the station, perhaps a much better car park. If we can gradually get more trains stopping, which should increase the number of passengers using the station, which will make the case for even more trains, we should ultimately get our hourly service and the park and ride site.

During the disruptions on May 28 it was good to see East Coast and East Midlands Trains both diverting trains when possible instead of just resorting to buses for everything. Recent surveys have all shown that during disruption,

engineering or otherwise, passengers prefer to stay on the train rather than be transferred to a bus even if the journey takes longer. This is something Railfuture have been campaigning on for many years and it is heartening that train operating companies (TOCs) seem to be coming round to our views.

Finally, I thank all those members who voted for me in the election for Chairman. I was very pleased to receive such an overwhelming vote of confidence. If you have any matters you wish to raise with me please do not hesitate to contact me (details on page 2). *David Harby*

Launch of the Lincoln to Kings Cross service

I was delighted to be invited by East Coast Trains (ECT) to travel on their first Lincoln to Kings Cross service. It was an excellent opportunity to meet (ECT) directors and other invitees in an informal setting and the opportunity was taken to point out the great potential Lincoln has for a 2 hourly service. The Virgin Trains service from Euston to Chester has been an outstanding success. Lincoln is very similar to Chester except we are also a thriving University City so there should be no reason why a Lincoln to London service should not be just as successful.

It was pointed out to ECT, the benefits to them of line speed and other improvements between Lincoln and Newark, and asked for their support in the campaign for these improvements.

It has also been reported in the local media that there were some useful discussions on the train between representatives of Network Rail and Lincolnshire County Council on the difficult issue of the Lincoln High Street level crossing.

The inaugural service was well loaded but if we are to put forward a strong case for more than one train a day each way when the next East Coast Main Line franchise is let, the new train needs to be well loaded day after day. As with all rail services in these times of economic stringency the advice has to be 'use it or lose it'. (DH)

Latest reports are that the awarding of the East Coast Main Line franchise will probably be delayed until mid 2013.

Sleaford News

The new brick relay building next to Sleaford East signal box is now finished, with a trackside walkway and railings giving it a smart appearance. Although the full purpose and exact area covered is not known, it is understood that installation of interior equipment is also complete.

As previously reported, much

trackwork is evident around Sleaford station. Some turnouts in the station now have point heaters. The east end of platform 1 has been slightly shortened due to the installation of fencing. The starter signal which also protects the level crossing is now sited adjacent to the new fence; a safety measure allowing greater distance between the signal and crossing. (PBJ)

PLUG THE GAP

Railfuture Lincolnshire branch is calling for Department for Transport to provide funds to enable East Midlands Trains to provide an hourly service between Lincoln and Nottingham throughout the full operating day.

Currently, after an hourly service during the daytime, the service is reduced to a two hourly service in the evening which Railfuture Lincolnshire considers is unacceptable. Two major East Midlands cities are entitled to expect at least an hourly service. This means, for example, that anyone travelling from Birmingham to Lincoln has to catch the 16.49 from Birmingham to Nottingham because if they caught the 17.19 they would face a wait of 1 hour 57 minutes at Nottingham until the 20.45 service departs to Lincoln.

The situation for some intermediate stations is even worse with many having nothing between a late afternoon service and the last train of the day. This is well illustrated by the situation at Hykeham. From Nottingham and Newark, if you miss the 18.15 from Nottingham you then have a 4 hours and 10 minutes wait until the last train at 22.25. In the other direction the situation is even worse as from Lincoln to Hykeham there are no trains between 17.28 and 22.27.

Situated as it is, close to the A46 Lincoln Bypass, Hykeham has the potential to become a major Park and Ride hub for the Lincoln area if more trains stopped there. With the recent withdrawal of evening bus services to many parts of Lincoln the case for more evening services to Hykeham has become even stronger.

The level of service provided by the train operator, East Midlands Trains (EMT), is as specified by the Department for Transport. It would appear that these improvements could be delivered from EMT's existing fleet albeit with additional costs for train crew, mileage and fuel.

As the Department for Transport saved £9 million a year by axing the proposed 2 hourly Lincoln to London Kings Cross service Railfuture Lincolnshire considers that the least they can do is to put some of that back into Lincoln by paying for 3 evening trains to fill the gaps.

What can you do?

In a word – lobby.

Write to your MP pointing out the deficiencies in the current service and asking them to lobby DfT on your behalf requesting that they provide sufficient funds to EMT to enable them to fill the gaps in the evening service with 3 extra trains calling at all stations.

You can write to your MP at House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA or details of his/her email address can be found at <http://www.theyworkforyou.com/>.

Monday – Friday timetable from 22 May 2011

Lincoln	17.28	18.35	20.45	21.42	22.27	Nottingham	18.15	20.29	22.25
Hykeham	17.36				22.35	Carlton	18.21		22.31
Swinderby	17.42				22.41	Burton Joyce	18.25		22.35
Collingham	17.47		21.00		22.46	Lowdham	18.30	20.40	22.40
Newark Castle	17.58	19.03	21.13	22.09	22.57	Thurgarton	18.34		
Rolleston	18.04					Bleasby	18.37		22.45
Fiskerton	18.06				23.04	Fiskerton	18.40		22.48
Bleasby	18.10				23.07	Rolleston	18.43		
Thurgarton	18.13					Newark Castle	18.53	20.57	22.57
Lowdham	18.17	19.16	21.26	22.22	23.12	Collingham	19.02	21.05	23.18
Burton Joyce	18.21				23.16	Swinderby	19.06		23.23
Carlton	18.24				23.20	Hykeham	19.12		23.29
Nottingham	18.32	19.29	21.42	22.34	23.32	Lincoln	19.25	21.22	23.41

For further information contact David Harby, Chairman Railfuture Lincolnshire, Tel 01522 874513, david.harby@railfuture.org.uk

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Commuting from Rauceby

As well as being station adopter at Ruskington, member, Paul Jowett, also looks after Rauceby and has evidence that the major Greylees housing development next to Rauceby station, on the Sleaford – Grantham line, has a number residents who commute to London.

Two years ago calls at many of the smaller stations on the Grantham – Skegness route were reduced and Rauceby lost all but two station calls in the Grantham direction and three in the Sleaford direction. These calls covered the basic requirement for work and school travel. Currently, the third train to Sleaford at night provides a useful connection from the East Coast departure from Kings Cross at around 18:00. Paul suggested at the Branch AGM in March, that if the first train from Sleaford had its Rauceby call re-instated it would provide, along with the existing evening call, an opportunity to commute by rail from Greylees to London. At the time of writing, it is understood that East Midlands Trains are taking the suggestion seriously for the December 2011 timetable. This is an example how local action from a station adopter can help.

With the size of Greylees, this could be a catalyst for further stops at Rauceby. May be something to press for at the franchise changeover. (PJB)

Friends of the Barton Line

- Barton Civic Society is seeking approval from Network Rail to clean up the old track bed alongside the disused goods platform in preparation to landscaping with new trees and shrubs.

- On 7 March there were cancellations on the Barton Line due to a power failure further down the line.

- With the introduction of the new timetable on 22 May which includes the recasting of the East Coast Main Line service, Times of TransPennine services in and out of Cleethorpes have a knock-on effect on the Barton – Cleethorpes times. Most trains now depart up to 6 minutes earlier.

- On 2 April a diesel hauled rail tour from Bristol to Cleethorpes arrived 2 hours late after having apparently been sent down the wrong tracks. A piper welcomed the train at Cleethorpes, but passengers had barely 20 minutes to grab some fish and chips for the return journey.

- The annual general meeting of the Friends of the Barton Line takes place on 13 July at the White Swan Inn, Barton on Humber. (AB)

Skegness Line Notes

- The West Street level crossing at Boston now has three lanes of traffic with new extended barriers.

- At Wainfleet, new barriers have replaced previously manually operated gates worked by gate wheel from the station signal box.

- No decision seems to have been made about easing Firsby Curve, commencing at milepost 122, so that line speed could be increased to 40mph. (GB/SELTA)

safety instructions, which service it was or where it stopped. Some passengers were already asking others to confirm they were on the right train. Shortly after leaving Liverpool the Senior Conductor did make an appearance to carry out a ticket check. There are no ticket barriers at Network Rail operated Liverpool Lime Street and our tickets only received a cursory glance from the ticket inspector at the platform entrance. The recently restored station looks resplendent, especially at night when dramatic lighting from a huge advertisement opposite reflects on to the stonework of the refurbished frontage. However, one black mark: we were concerned that pigeons frequently flew inside the Uppercrust refreshment outlet on the concourse.

The service was lightly loaded when it left Liverpool but gradually filled up at the intermediate stations to Manchester Piccadilly and remained very crowded through Stockport to Sheffield. As the journey progressed, there were plenty of complaints from passengers boarding the train and not being able to occupy their reserved seats. With a complete public address silence from the Senior Conductor, passenger comfort was exasperated by lack of information about station calls.

With a reversal at Sheffield we travelled 'backwards' and faced the rear cab, so I was relieved to see the Senior Conductor was still on board as he emerged to despatch the train at Sheffield, Chesterfield, Alfreton and Langley Mill. On approaching the platform at Nottingham I swear I heard a grunt of syllables that could have said the word: Nottingham! The refreshment trolley had joined the train at Stockport and left at Nottingham, but had not made an appearance to sell its wares during the journey.

A crew change took place at

Nottingham and suddenly, we were on a different service. The 'new' Senior Conductor stood by the door to 'meet and greet' passengers boarding the train, came on to the train to make two announcements before departure and kept us fully informed during the non-stop run to Grantham. Although, for some reason, a stop was made at the Rectory Junction signal box.

The outward journey is timed to take 38 minutes from departure at Grantham to arrival at Nottingham; as mentioned earlier, with the lifting of some speed restrictions this was achieved in less than 30 minutes. The return journey is timed at 34 minutes and built into the timing is a signal stop at Barrowby Road Junction to allow the 17:07 Grantham to Skegness service to clear the single line 'western loop'. Arrival at Grantham was still a few minutes early.

Using East Midlands Trains' (EMT) Norwich to Liverpool Lime Street service demonstrated two things. We used off-peak services in both directions, but it was all too obvious that there is a need for the Department for Transport to let EMT have longer trains at these times and not limit the strengthening of trains to peak times mid-week. The only noticeable ease of loadings on our journey took place on the return from Nottingham. Secondly, EMT do put great emphasis on customer service, but the experience on our return journey between Liverpool and Nottingham proved that no matter how much training staff receive, occasionally, human nature being what it is, a member of staff can slip through the net. (PM)

Branch Annual General Meeting

The branch AGM was very well attended with almost a full room for the public session in the afternoon. In the contest for chairman David Harby was the winner by a vote of 24 to 5. The rest of the officers were re-elected unopposed. Except for Reg Poole, who asked to stand down as a full member and switch to a corresponding member, the branch committee is unchanged. Full details of the officers and committee are listed on page 2.

Phil Cameron, East Coast Trains' Intercity Express Programme Director, gave a very informative review of the company's progress and its plans for the future. Performance is improving but four fifths of recent delays had been caused by external factors. Network Rail is investing over £11 million in the route to improve maintenance and infrastructure, and remove those external factors that are causing delays.

He talked about the new timetable to be introduced on 22 May 2011. There would be 10,500 extra seats per day with Grantham, Newark and Retford all getting

more services. Lincoln would get a new daily service. There would be a new catering offer introduced with the new timetable. First class passengers will get offered a free meal.

David Horne, East Midlands Trains' Commercial and Customer Services Manager, reviewed changes to Lincolnshire services since his last visit. These included the Lincoln - St Pancras service, High Speed Trains to Skegness in the summer, Lincoln Station resigalled, punctuality and station improvements.

Lincoln station improvements, including new toilets, are taking place now. At Skegness a lot of demolition is taking place.

There were lively discussions in both the morning and afternoon sessions which gave your committee some ideas of the issues we should be concentrating on. Better services to Nottingham, better and later services to Market Rasen and Grimsby, concern over plans to close Sleaford level crossing were just a few issues the committee need to address.

(DH)

Diversions

The East Coast Main Line was blocked just south of Grantham on 28 May when the pantograph on 1A18 Leeds to Kings Cross became entangled with the overhead wires at around 10:00. It took most of the day to repair the damage. In the meantime at least 6 East Coast Trains (ECT) services and 3 freight trains were diverted via the Joint Line. East Midlands Trains sent some Liverpool - Norwich trains directly from Nottingham to Peterborough via Oakham, missing out the Grantham stop. ECT ran services from Grantham northwards with passengers being bussed between Grantham and Peterborough.

East Coast Trains had a bad Bank Holiday weekend, with over running engineering work and overhead wire problems between Doncaster and York disrupting services on Sunday morning.

(DH)

Demonstrating how out of touch the media is when it comes to railway matters, the BBC Television East Midlands Today news programme on 28 May, reported that overhead wires were down on the mainline between Stamford and Grantham, illustrating the item with film footage of Lincoln station and St. Pancras International! (Ed)

New look for Metheringham Station

Chris Brown attends the opening of the refurbished Metheringham Station:

At a ceremony on 12 April 2011, the refurbished Metheringham Station was officially reopened as The Metheringham Transport Hub in the presence of representatives of Lincolnshire County Council, Local Councils, Railfuture, Network Rail, Nationwide Rail Services (contractors) and East Midlands Trains.

Blankney & Metheringham Station was opened on 1 July 1882 by The Great Eastern & Great Northern Joint Railway and subsequently closed by British Railways. Following the creation of Lincolnshire County Council in 1974, it was reopened as a very basic Metheringham Station on 6 October 1975. The increase in usage from 30,000 in the late seventies to 100,000 in 2009 lead to what could be called the current re-reopening.

The work at the "Hub" was funded by a partnership of Lincolnshire County Council, Network Rail and East Midlands Trains and has provided a high quality, disability friendly, interchange facility

between rail and bus with, in addition, a new modern car park for 29 cars, 12 of the latest state of the art cycle racks, new lighting and upgraded platforms and waiting shelters.

There is a dedicated bus stop in the car park for the Call Connect demand responsive bus service provided by the County Council and, in what is thought to be a first for this country for a demand responsive service, through tickets are available from the bus operator to all stations on The Redwing Line from Lincoln to Peterborough. Call Connect Buses can be booked up to one hour before travel either by phone or online and serve villages in the catchment area that do not have a regular conventional bus service.

There are also two bus stops on the main road at the end of the approach road for the two conventional bus services that still serve Metheringham.

It is good to see Lincolnshire County Council promoting the use of Public Transport and we look forward to further "Hubs" to the East and West of Lincoln. (CB)

Railways Remembered Film Shows

A programme of the popular Railways Remembered film shows is being presented by Rob Foxon at the Palace Theatre, Newark (box office: 01636 655755) and the Memorial Hall, Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes (details: 0116 2890531).

Shows at the Palace Theatre, Newark are: 13 October 2011 with "British Railways - 1950s" and on 1 December a "Special Xmas Programme".

At the Memorial Hall, Cleethorpes, on 17 November the subject is "Railways in Wartime" (a recommended interesting and different show). (PBJ)

Skegness News

- At Skegness station, the building consisting of the old buffet, crew room and former coal offices etc, has been demolished. Brick rubble from the site is being pushed into the deep cellars of the old buffet and the whole site levelled prior to possible landscaping.

- Problems with the points near the signal box appear to have been rectified and all platforms can now be used. (CS)

Contrasting Customer Service

Your Editor describes a journey with East Midlands Trains

At the beginning of June, my wife and I enjoyed a weekend break in Liverpool. At 11:58 on the Friday, we boarded East Midlands Trains' Norwich to Liverpool Lime Street service at Grantham. Even though this was an off-peak time, the two-car Class 158 unit was fairly full at Grantham, with the majority of seats being reserved. We had reservations in Coach A, but a minor difficulty was the lack of identification letters on the outside of the vehicles. This service ran non-stop to Nottingham, arriving outside the station for a signal check as it was several minutes early. Many passengers left the train at Nottingham and a greater number boarded. A catering trolley also joined the train and there was a change of crew. Running just a few minutes late, calls were made at Alfreton, Chesterfield and Sheffield, where the 10 minute scheduled stop (for the driver to 'change ends') was extended by a further 15 minutes due to a technical fault. At this stage, passengers were kept fully informed by the Senior Conductor, who also apologised for the non-working air conditioning on this very hot day. More passengers had joined the train at Sheffield which was now 'full and standing'. Passengers were informed that anyone who did not feel like standing for forty minutes on the Sheffield to Stockport leg of the journey could transfer to a TransPennine Manchester Airport service. Earlier, the Senior Conductor had passed through the train removing reservation tickets from unoccupied seats and asking seated passengers to remove baggage from seats.

Next stop was Stockport, about 10 minutes late, with some passengers hurrying to make connections at this

popular interchange point. The refreshment trolley also left the train here; despite the crowded train it had managed to pass through the train on three occasions. Many more joined the train at Manchester Piccadilly. The next call was Manchester Oxford Road where I was surprised by the large number leaving the train compared to the seemingly busier Piccadilly. From here on to Liverpool, with calls at Warrington Central, Widnes and Liverpool South Parkway, the service became less full. Arrival at Liverpool Lime Street was about 15 minutes late. With the volume of passengers using the service, station stops were obviously taking longer.

We departed Liverpool Lime Street on the Sunday at 13:52 and experienced a completely different service to that experienced on the outward journey, when, despite a very busy service and a delay, information given to customers could not be faulted. This time, we had reservations in Coach B. As I approached the centre of the train, which again had no outside indication of coach letters, the Senior Conductor, was in the process of telling a cyclist he could not take his cycle on the train because he had not pre-booked it, but he would waive the rules and let him on. I asked which was Coach B and was directed to the leading vehicle. When aboard, it became apparent that there were no seat reservation tickets attached to the seats. Surely the Senior Conductor could have told me this when I asked about Coach B; having a reservation being the only reason to ask the question.

Departure from Liverpool was on time, but in complete silence as far as any announcements being made by the Senior Conductor - no welcome aboard,