

## Weekday service returns to Gainsborough Central

**Details on page 5**

Photo Tony Behan



### From the Branch Chairman

It is a pleasure to be writing this commentary for an edition of *Rail Lincs* where we have something positive to celebrate. If anyone had told me 5 years ago that Gainsborough Central would see 13 trains per day, every day, Monday to Saturday I would have laughed at them, but that 13 train per day service is now a reality. There is a detailed report later in this issue but I will repeat here the key message – *be flexible, look for opportunities that you might not expect to arise and if they do arise be ready to exploit them.*

After a seemingly indefinite period of waiting, we finally heard on 10 April that the East Midlands Rail Franchise had been awarded to Abellio East Midlands. I would normally, at this time, say that

Abellio had won the franchise but in this case they were the only bidder left after both the Arriva and Stagecoach bids had been declared non compliant. With the secrecy surrounding franchise bids we will probably never know how the other two compared to the Abellio bid. The franchise will commence on 18 August 2019 and last until 21 August 2027, with the option for the Secretary of State to extend for a further 2 years.

At this stage, we know the minimum service level, as that was specified in the Invitation to Tender and has been described in previous *Rail Lincs*, but as far as Lincolnshire is concerned that is about all we do know. Extra car parking spaces, cycle hubs and station improvements are all mentioned in the

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franchise publicity, but these are all expected to be at Midland Main Line stations. Abellio are currently busy organising the franchise changeover, signing rolling stock leases etc and cannot tell us much more until this is all completed.

Another good news story was the confirmation from LNER that their promised extra services from Lincoln to Kings Cross will start this year. The extra trains are shown in the LNER printed timetable and are on the online timetable database from 9 September, but 'informed sources' tell me that they will actually start later in the autumn. The services will be operated by 5-car Azuma bi-modes which are currently under construction.

Initially these are Lincoln to Kings Cross but there is strong lobbying by Humberside organisations for them to be extended to Grimsby or Cleethorpes. Informed sources say LNER would like to extend some at least, but this will take time before any decision is made. The route needs to be checked to confirm the Azumas are within gauge for the route,

timetables need to be checked to see if there is track capacity for them and lastly, the most important factor will be to see if a positive business case can be made. My personal hunch is that if any are extended they will start with the first and last trains of the day.

Yet another positive is the announcement that the bid for Access for All funding to pay for a lift at Retford has been successful. Hopefully this will be constructed quickly so both Retford low level platforms have lifts in time for the Mayflower 400 celebrations next year.

Readers will, I'm sure, recall my regular pleas for new blood to come forward to serve on the branch committee. After the AGM I'm pleased to welcome Steve Moir to the committee.

After all the positive news, I must end on a very sad note with a few words about long standing member Paul Jowett who passed away on 30 March. Paul was well respected in the rail industry locally, as evidenced by there being over 20 people related to rail and other public transport, paying their respects to him at his funeral.

*David Harby  
Branch Chairman*

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## New Freight Flows in the County

DCRail part of the Cappagh Group of companies has commenced a new contract with Total Aggregates, moving recycled rail ballast from Carlisle to Boston.

East Midlands based Total Aggregates opened the Boston railhead in 2018 to supply aggregates to customers across Lincolnshire.

This is the first occasion that Total Aggregates has procured its own rail services and the initial campaign will see 10,000 tonnes moved to the railhead, removing over 350 lorry journeys from the roads of rural Lincolnshire.

At Boston the recycled rail ballast is blended with local aggregate for use in a variety of construction projects and further campaigns are already being planned. *(source: Rail Freight Group)*

There have been an increasing number of intermodal services using the Joint Line. GBRf have a new one just started from Felixstowe to Doncaster iport

Overall UK rail freight usage has recently increased by 3%

*(PM/DH)*



## **Paul Brook Jowett**

**10.03.1938 – 30.03.2019**

*a tribute by David Harby, Chairman of Railfuture Lincolnshire branch*

It is my sad duty to report the loss of another very long standing Railfuture member. After a period of illness, Paul Jowett passed away in hospital on 30 March 2019.

For the last two years during his period of illness, Paul had almost withdrawn from active transport campaigning, but before that he had for many years been a valuable member of our branch committee. His knowledge of Lincolnshire public transport, both current and historic could best be described as encyclopaedic.

I first met Paul in the late 1980s when I found him to be hard working and exceptionally diligent in his campaigning. By then he had been campaigning for many years and having been a founder member of SELTA (South East Lincolnshire Travellers' Association) and serving as their first Chairman from November 1976.

When Lincolnshire branch started to produce our own newsletter in 1991 Paul answered the call for volunteers and edited *Rail Lincs* from edition 2 in January 1992 until Phil Mason took over the combined role of editor and printer in September 1997. I typed the first few pre computer newsletters and can still visualise the handwritten copy that came from Paul. Like everything he did it was very precise and accurate.

When the branch started to have a regular stall at the Grantham Rail Show, Paul was always one of the first to volunteer to help, which he did almost every year.

Away from Railfuture, for many years Paul distributed timetables to a long list of outlets in the Sleaford area and was a very vocal critic of the trend away from printing timetables towards having everything available on the internet. He was also a diligent Station Adopter for Ruskington and Rauceby stations.

His personality and contribution to his local community is summed up in this contribution from the Partnership Manager and the Chairman of the Transport and Accessibility Group (formerly the Better Transport Group) at North Kesteven District Council:

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*“Paul was a passionate advocate of the improvement and use of railway services. He was a regular contributor to the District Council’s Transport and Accessibility Group and was hugely informative and supportive when the group were bidding for additional and increased routes around the NKDC area, and the county as a whole. His knowledge was second to none and the team will miss him very much.*

*Paul was a lovely man who always had a smile on his face and would chat to us all about all manner of things. He was a true gentleman who was equally happy to share his knowledge, or listen to others and offer words of advice. Paul thought nothing of giving up his spare time in order to benefit others.*

*Having been part of the group for many years, Paul was very much classed as a friend as well as a member of the team, and we were all very sad to hear that he had passed away.”*

Paul’s long standing contribution to sustainable transport was recognised in 2014 when he was presented with a "Community Champion" Award by North Kesteven District Council.

Paul’s many friends said goodbye to him at a funeral service at St. Andrew’s Church, Leasingham on 15 May.

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## **Skegness News**

On Bank Holiday Monday, 27 May, a charter train from Swindon, promoted by Pathfinder Rail Tours, arrived at Skegness with 375 passengers alighting in a happy atmosphere with the Skegness Silver Band on the concourse playing “I do like to be beside the seaside”.

Originating in Swindon, the Class 66 locomotive was substituted at Derby for a pair of Class 20s for the journey to Skegness and return to Derby. The train went into the sidings and the locos shunted, so good to see the carriage sidings used again. The Class 20s were renowned on the Skegness route and

always attract passengers. I recognised many faces from the 1980s and 90s when Class 20s ran every Saturday – although nowadays perhaps not running along the platform!

Since the introduction of the summer timetable, there has been some strengthening of train capacity and always on Sunday services. Many services comprise 2 x Class 153s. When Abellio take over the East Midlands franchise, I wish consideration could be given to the idea at Scot Rail by removing seats from a Class 153 and tow it behind just for luggage.

*(Carolyn Sharp)*

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## **Car Park Charges for Barnetby**

TransPennine Express have invested in additional car parking spaces at Barnetby station providing, an uplift in the total number of spaces that are available. Following this investment in the provision of additional spaces, charging will be introduced and further information will be available to customers in due course in advance of the introduction of charges.

*(source: TransPennine Express)*

# Weekday trains return to Gainsborough Central

Monday 20 May was an important day for the future economy of Gainsborough. At 07:55 the first weekday train for just over 25 years arrived at Gainsborough Central to mark the start of a new service between Gainsborough, Retford, Worksop and Sheffield.

Trains will depart hourly Monday to Saturday calling at all stations between Gainsborough Central and Sheffield. As the name implies Central station is in the centre of Gainsborough immediately adjacent to Marshalls Yard shopping centre. The other station Gainsborough Lea Road is on the Sheffield/Doncaster to Lincoln line on the outskirts of Gainsborough.

Since October 1993, the only trains to serve Gainsborough Central had been 3 trains each way on Saturdays between Sheffield and Cleethorpes and, despite campaigners using every opportunity, such as a franchise change, to ask for improvements, prospects for any major change had seemed remote. That was until plans were announced for a new hourly all stations service between Sheffield and Retford which would enable the Lincoln - Sheffield - Leeds service to be speeded up by removing stops at lesser used stations.

Campaigners noticed that the layover time at Retford was sufficient for the service to be extended to Gainsborough Central and that this had some

operational advantages, so the campaign for the extension started in earnest. Campaigners including Railfuture came together to convince Northern Railway that the extension was possible and would have financial benefits.

Key to this was extensive lobbying and drawing together of support by the North Notts and Lincs Community Rail Partnership (NNLCRP) and especially their chairman, Barry Coward. The result was a partnership between the NNLCRP, West Lindsey District Council, Lincolnshire County Council and the train operator, Northern.

Now the service has started we are into an equally important second phase where all the partners will need to play their parts. This is to market the service, build up passenger numbers and be ready with a good business case for extension beyond Gainsborough when the current franchise ends.

As mentioned above, the new service has enabled the Lincoln - Sheffield - Leeds service to become a genuine inter urban service. Journey times have already improved by around 9 minutes with more potential journey time reductions to come when new Class 195 rolling stock arrives and some performance issues affecting timetable robustness have been resolved.

This success demonstrates an important lesson for campaigners - *be flexible, look for opportunities that you might not expect to arise and if they do arise be ready to exploit them.*

(DH)

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## New DVDs including the Lincolnshire Area compiled by Geoff Meanwell

| Title   | Publisher           |         |
|---|---------------------|---------|
| Rails to the East Coast (Skegness)                                | Transport Video Co. |         |
| In the Works Vol. 2 (Doncaster)                                   | TVP                 |         |
| Kings Cross - Retford Class 86/92                                 | Videoscene          |         |
| A Day at Doncaster  | Videoscene          | BlueRay |
| East Coast Main Line Peterborough to York Steam Driver's Eye View | Videoscene          | BlueRay |
| Midland Main Line/Robin Hood Class 150 - 170                      | Videoscene          |         |
| East Coast/Lincolnshire C;lass 150 - 180                          | Videoscene          |         |
| Nottingham to Skegness Driver's Eye View                          | Vidéo 125           | BlueRay |

# Friends of the Barton Line

- In connection with clearing the excess vegetation on Barton platform, the Lions Club are also considering adopting the station as a group. A Lions on the Line event took place on 29 March using the 17:55 departure from Barton and visiting the inns at Stallingborough, Ulceby and Habrough.
  - TransPennine Express is having to restrict access to WCs and waiting rooms at its stations because of increased issues with drug addicts, vandals and vagrants.
  - Network Rail has been contacted by FoBL over the particularly inconvenient timing of engineering works on the Barton Line. Planned engineering works will also impact on the Barton Bike Night on 13 July. Concerns have also been expressed to Martin Vickers MP over the excessive engineering closures of the already sparse Barton Sunday service.
  - Northern Rail has been asked to reinstate the first and last trains calling at New Clew station. (AASB)
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## Update on Doncaster Platform 0

To remind readers, Platform 0 at Doncaster is known by local users as 'Doncaster North'. It is a bay platform used by the Doncaster to Scunthorpe stopping service and soon to be used by the Doncaster to Hull service. It poses a number of issues to passengers trying to get to it from platforms 4, 5, 7 and 8.

One of our biggest issues is that the TransPennine Express (TPE) from Manchester to Cleethorpes is timetabled to arrive on platform 4, seven minutes before the stopping service leaves. At a meeting between Yorkshire Railfuture branch and Sheffield City Region, we were told that they had challenged the seven minute connection time with LNER. This had apparently been tested, using their customer assistance service, and it was claimed that it was sufficient. This raises a number of issues.

**1.** The Trans Pennine is regularly running a few minutes late, cutting that time down. Missing the stopper means an hour wait at Doncaster.

**2.** Sometimes, the stopper service is held to allow the late running TPE to go out first, but sometimes it isn't. There is no logic to the decision making. This means that passengers getting off the TPE have no way of knowing whether or not it is worth the rush.

**3.** Assistance is available to people who book in advance, and is a very good service. However, there will be passengers coming off the TPE who have no idea of the existence of platform 0 and the time it takes to reach it, until they get there and are therefore unaware of the need for assistance. Staffing levels at Doncaster were reduced when Virgin gave up the franchise, but are now being increased. During this time, it has been hard to find a member of staff to help. After 9pm security staff are available but not necessarily in the right place when in a hurry.

**4.** My concern is that the solution proposed is to extend the connection time to ten minutes. All this will do is prevent passengers who miss the connection from claiming compensation. They will still be forced to spend an hour awaiting a connection.

What is needed is a slight timetable change to move the two services, running on the same line, further apart to enable proper connections.

Staff at Sheffield City Region have advised that we need to find evidence of loss of passengers or inconvenience to passengers so that a good business case be argued with the train operators for making changes. (Ann Hindley)

# Day Out by Rail

On Saturday, 25 May, a group of Grantham Railway Society members enjoyed the Society's ninth day out by Rail. This time, the destination was the preserved North Norfolk Railway.

The day commenced at 08:20, joining the East Midlands Trains (EMT) Nottingham to Norwich service with seat reservations, although on boarding the train, it became apparent there were neither Reservation tickets on the seats or identification letters on the 2-car Class 156, fortunately the service was lightly loaded. Unlike the majority of services on this route, the 08:20 departure was timed at 40 minutes for the Grantham to Peterborough leg, whereas most services are timed at 30/33 minutes. The reason was soon discovered when we were confined to the Slow line to allow LNER Up services to pass.

About 3 miles north of Peterborough, we observed the extensive earthworks for the construction of the 'dive-under' at Werrington Junction, which will enable freight trains from East Anglia to access the Joint Line without conflicting with East Coast Main Line (ECML) services. However, as there are no plans to construct a link from the ECML Up lines, to the new alignment, trains such as the Norwich bound service and any freight traffic from the ECML will still be faced with crossing the ECML to access the west side of Peterborough station; our service was subsequently held at signals before being given a path to move over to platform 6 at Peterborough.

Despite the slow journey and signal checks between Grantham and Peterborough, we had a spirited journey across the Fens to Ely with a right-time arrival. A swift reversal and 'changing ends' for the crew and we were soon on

our way to Norwich; a fast service with one stop at Thetford. Interestingly, a study of the timetable showed one West bound service on a Sunday does not call at Ely station, but is routed on to the Ely Loop, a sharply curved line only used in a westerly direction, it enables trains from the East to avoid reversal in Ely station.

Arrival at Norwich was due at 10:43 and we planned to join the Greater Anglia service to Sheringham at 11:45. However, there was the remote possibility that we might make the 10:45 to Sheringham if our EMT service was running a minute or so early. On the approach to Norwich, Realtime Trains data estimated an early arrival, but hopes faded when we had a signal check on the approach to the unique Trowse Swing-bridge – a single line structure and the only swing-bridge in the UK carrying overhead line equipment. Having negotiated this bottleneck, there was a further stop on the approach to Norwich station where the Sheringham service passed before we entered the station. No doubt there are train planning pathing issues which prevent a longer connection time. But is this a result of the fragmented privatised railway where different companies do not communicate effectively for the benefit of the passenger?

A few miles before Norwich, the Conductor passed through the train installing Seat Reservation tickets for the return working and the majority of seats in the train were soon allocated as reserved.

On the approach to Norwich station we negotiated Wensum Junction passing Crown Point Depot where examples of the new Swiss built Stadler Flirt bi-modal units were stabled. These articulated trains are due to be used on

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various Greater Anglia routes including the Norwich-Great Yarmouth services, currently worked by a pair of Class 37s top and tailing a rake of Direct Rail Services coaches, an example of which was in an adjacent platform when we arrived.

The hourly Greater Anglia to Norwich to Sheringham service (The Bittern Line) was full and standing – seat reservations were not available on this 2-car Class 156 service, although in view of the number of cycles and luggage, additional accommodation would have been useful. The hour long journey to Sheringham, included calls at Salhouse and Hoveton & Wroxham, before joining the single-line to Gunton, Roughton Road, Cromer (reversal) and West Runton.

Final arrival at Sheringham was 12:44 with ample time to cross the road from the Network Rail Station to the North Norfolk Railway (NNR) station. The NNR offers an incentive for visitors to travel to Sheringham by rail by offering a 10% reduction off its train tickets on production of a National Rail ticket to Sheringham. An excellent idea which other visitor attractions, not necessarily rail orientated, should take on-board.

For the return journey we departed Sheringham on the 16:49 service to Norwich, then, after an hour wait, boarded the 18:57 EMT Norwich – Nottingham service, formed of a 2-car Class 158 with seat reservations duly allocated, arriving Grantham, on-time, at 20:58.

Overall fare, for a good day out – total 255 miles, using Advance Singles for the Grantham–Norwich leg and Off Peak Day Return for Norwich–Sheringham was £29.40 with a Senior Railcard. (PM)

## Improvements to Grantham Pedestrian Tunnel Defeated

The pedestrian tunnel at Grantham, linking Station Approach and Huntingtower Road (Bridge 242), has suffered a long history of vandalism and anti-social behaviour. In recent months, LNER in conjunction with Network Rail and students at Grantham College Graphic Art Department has made an effort to brighten and tidy-up the tunnel interior with new lighting and the installation of artwork panels designed by the students. However, after only a few weeks, there were further attacks by vandals and some graphic panels were damaged. Due to the curvature of the tunnel, it was not possible to fit the panels flush to the walls and subsequently there was a space which enabled them to be levered off.

In recent weeks, after repairs had been carried out, further vandalism has taken place resulting in LNER to reluctantly make the decision to completely remove the artwork panels before further damage takes place. An LNER spokesperson says the company hopes to be able to relocate them at a safer location within the station. (PM)

## Scunthorpe Access for All Scheme

The £3.5 million Access for All scheme at Scunthorpe station is now well advanced and due to be completed in the coming weeks. The scheme includes a new footbridge and two new 16-person lifts to deliver accessible routes to platforms one and two. A small number of additional car parking spaces have been provided in conjunction with these works.



# At Last – Improvements at Retford

## £115,000 station upgrade

A £115,000 upgrade of Retford Railway Station is on track to smarten up one of the town's most prominent landmarks, celebrate the surrounding area's heritage and improve customer experience.

The upgrade project features a revamp of the subway to Ordsall including new LED lighting, improvements to the steps, a new surface for the tunnel footpath, repainting of the walls and new decorative panels.

Other elements of the project include new station and town centre signposts, new 'Welcome to Retford' signs on the platforms and in the entrance hall, and new window displays and interpretation panels that focus on Retford's Heritage and the destinations that can be reached from Retford Station.

The multi-partner project is being funded through a £90,000 grant from LNER's Customer and Community Investment Fund, in partnership with Bassetlaw District Council and supported by North Notts & Lincs Community Rail Partnership (NNLCRP) and Retford Civic Society. In addition, funding of £25,000 has been provided by Nottinghamshire County Council to carry out the subway improvements.

## At last a Lift for Retford

After 54 years we are finally going to get a lift to platform 3 at Retford. This is third time lucky as there have been two previous applications for this funding. With the services at platform 3 doubling from May, this cannot come too soon.

Railfuture sent a letter of support to LNER to back up their application as did North Notts and Lincs Community Rail Partnership and Travel Watch East Midlands (TWEM).

Historically, there used to be a flat crossing over the ECML at Retford, similar to the one that still exists at Newark. In the later 1950s and early 1960s when the Trent Valley power stations were being built it was realised that to have a long procession of Merry-Go-Round coal trains crossing the ECML at Retford on their way to these power stations would be an impossible situation. Funding was found to construct the grade separation at Retford (I think from CEGB) and platforms 3 and 4 opened in 1964. A parcels lift was provided on platform 4 as this was the platform used by the newspaper trains from Manchester. (DH)

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## Planned disruption to ECML Services

All services on the East Coast Main Line (ECML) between Kings Cross and Doncaster and on the Nottingham – Lincoln line will be disrupted during the August Bank Holiday weekend (24– 26 August) when the unique flat crossing at Newark is to be replaced.

Also during the same weekend, no trains will run between Peterborough and London Kings Cross as new tracks, signals and engineering works take place to bring back into use a disused tunnel bore at Gasworks tunnel on the approach to Kings Cross station throat. The number of tracks into the station will eventually increase from four to six. The upgrade is all part of a £1.2bn upgrade of the ECML to accommodate the new LNER Azuma trains.

# Lincolnshire Charters

Compiled by Geoffrey Meanwell

## **Saturday, 22 June**

Kings Cross, Potters Bar, Stevenage, **Peterborough to Berwick-up Tweed**  
Haulage to be advised. Promoter: UK Railtours

## **Saturday, 22 June**

Norwich, Diss, Ipswich, Stowmarket, Bury St. Edmunds, Ely, March, **Peterborough to Edinburgh**  
Haulage Class 68 x 2 (top & tail). Promoter: NENTA

## **Thursday, 27 June**

Stratford (London), Shenfield, Chelmsford, Ipswich, Bury St. Edmunds, Ely to **Lincoln**  
Haulage to be advised. Promoter: Steam Dreams

## **Saturday, 29 June**

London Victoria. Shenfield, Colchester, Ipswich, Bury St. Edmunds, Ely, **Peterborough to Newcastle**  
Haulage to be advised. Promoter: Steam Dreams

## **Tuesday, 2 July**

Newcastle, **Peterborough**, Ely, Bury St. Edmunds, Ipswich, Colchester to **London Victoria**  
Haulage to be advised. Promoter: Steam Dreams

## **Saturday, 20 July**

Kings Cross, Potters Bar, Stevenage, **Peterborough, Retford to Carlisle**  
Haulage "Tornado" \* Promoter: UK Railtours

## **Saturday, 17 August**

Kings Cross, Potters Bar, Stevenage, **Peterborough, Retford to Carlisle**  
Haulage "Tornado"\* Promoter: UK Railtours

## **Saturday, 24 August**

**Grantham**, Nottingham, Ilkeston, Chesterfield, Doncaster to **Carlisle**  
Haulage "Tornado" \* Promoter: UK Railtours

\* Steam for part of journey only. 'Haulage to be advised' means steam, diesel or electric as available.

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## Editor's Mail

I was pleased to see an increase in the numbers using Cleethorpes, Great Coates and Grimsby Town Stations in recent years (*Rail Lincs 83*). I believe the figures would be even higher if some kind of joint ticket applying to both buses and trains as happens in our biggest cities.

For because people like myself have already purchased a weekly bus ticket, we are loath to fork out again for a rail journey even when this would be a lot, lot quicker.

*Tim Mickleburgh, Grimsby.*

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## Promoting Railfuture

There are forthcoming opportunities for the Branch to get out and about to promote Railfuture. Please let Ann Hindley know, as soon as possible so that booking arrangements can be made, if you can help staff a stand at any of the following events:

### **30, 31 August & 1 September**

Moana–Water of Life, Navigating Climate Change for Planetary Health. An International Conference hosted by the University of Lincoln and the Diocese of Lincoln.

### **28/20 September**

Boston Model Railway Exhibition

### **26/27 October**

Caistor Model Railway Exhibition

### **2/3 November**

Spalding Model Railway Exhibition

[ann@hindley.gn/apc.org](mailto:ann@hindley.gn/apc.org)

## Bus/Train Integration at Grantham



Photo: John Ginns

Train/Bus integration has taken a step forward at Grantham with the Stagecoach Lincoln – Grantham Connect Route 1 service now terminating at the railway station. This is in addition to the Centrebus service 9 Sunningdale Estate, Grantham town centre to Harlaxton and Woolsthorpe. The bus stop is on Station Approach and the Lincoln service has prompted complaints from motorists as the parked bus blocks car parking spaces impairing manoeuvrability of cars.

(PM)

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***Reminder:***  
***Contributions of material for Rail Lincs  
are always welcome***

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**Direct link to Branch News visit:**

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Please let the Editor Phil Mason, 10 Cottesmore Close, Grantham NG31 9JL, [phil.mason@trackprint.net](mailto:phil.mason@trackprint.net) have copy by 14 September.

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*Refer to page 11 for contact details of branch officers mentioned in Rail Lincs.*