

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

A VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

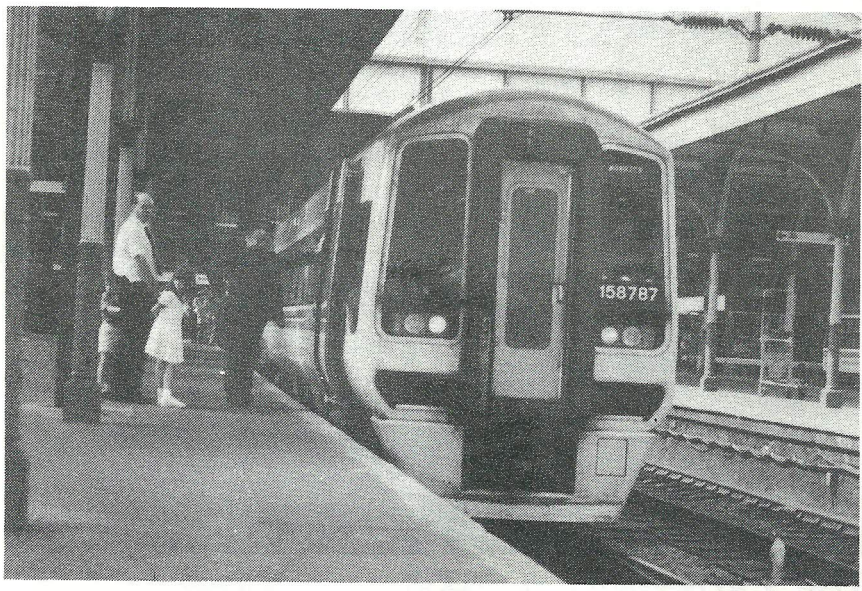


SPRINT ACROSS ENGLAND

If you have not travelled by train between East Anglia, the Midlands and the North West for some years, you will be surprised at how much this journey has changed.

Gone are the leisurely services and inconvenient changes of yesteryear.

Since 1988 modern Sprinter trains have given fast, frequent links from Norwich, Ipswich and Cambridge, to Peterborough and on to Leicester and Birmingham, or to Nottingham, Sheffield, Manchester and Liverpool. As a result, more people have used the trains; but will the Government's privatisation proposals threaten these services?



AT NORWICH-THORPE STATION, SPRINTER 158787 ABOUT TO DEPART FOR BIRMINGHAM VIA PETERBOROUGH.

The Train Service

Every weekday Sprinter trains leave Norwich for Liverpool at 5.45, 9.54 (Sat 10.02), 11.56, 13.56, 14.54 and 15.56.

Trains leave Cambridge for Liverpool at 7.22, 9.36, 11.46, 18.06.

There are also 3-5 trains each way on each route on Sundays.

Every weekday trains leave Norwich for Coventry at 7.00, 9.00, 11.00, 13.00, 17.26 and 19.48.

Trains leave Cambridge for Coventry at 10.58, 12.50, 14.50, 15.50 (Sat 15.48), 17.11 and 19.30.

At Coventry, frequent electric trains connect with Birmingham International (for the airport and National Exhibition Centre) and Birmingham New Street in the heart of the city. Once essential engineering work is completed, the Sprinters from East Anglia will again run through to Birmingham.

Trains run from Liverpool through to Norwich at 6.49, 8.52, 10.52, 12.52, 14.52; and to Cambridge at 5.12, 7.48, 9.52, 11.52 and 15.52.

From Coventry through trains leave for Norwich at 7.45 (Sat 7.23), 10.08, 12.05, 13.44, 16.06, 18.07 (Sat 18.10), 20.10; and to Cambridge at 6.44, 8.49 (Sat 8.43), 12.57, 15.03, 16.56 and 18.53.

Again, each route has Sunday Sprinters as well, but at a reduced frequency.

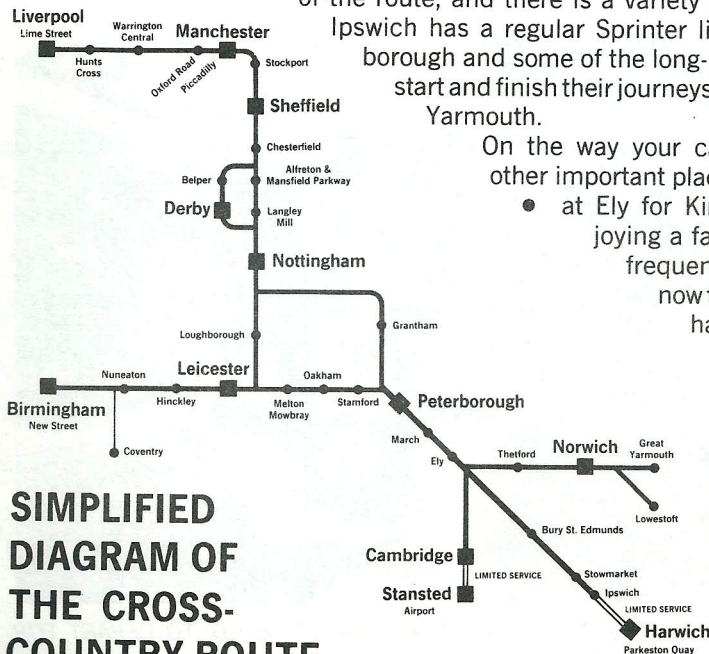
That's not all . . .

A through train, the 'Vincent van Gogh', runs every morning, Mon - Sat. From Harwich Parkeston Quay and Ipswich to Liverpool and back in the evening, connecting with sailings to and from the Hook of Holland. Other services run over parts of the route, and there is a variety of local trains.

Ipswich has a regular Sprinter link with Peterborough and some of the long-distance trains start and finish their journeys at Lowestoft or Yarmouth.

On the way you can change for other important places:

- at Ely for King's Lynn, enjoying a faster and more frequent train service now that British Rail have electrified the line

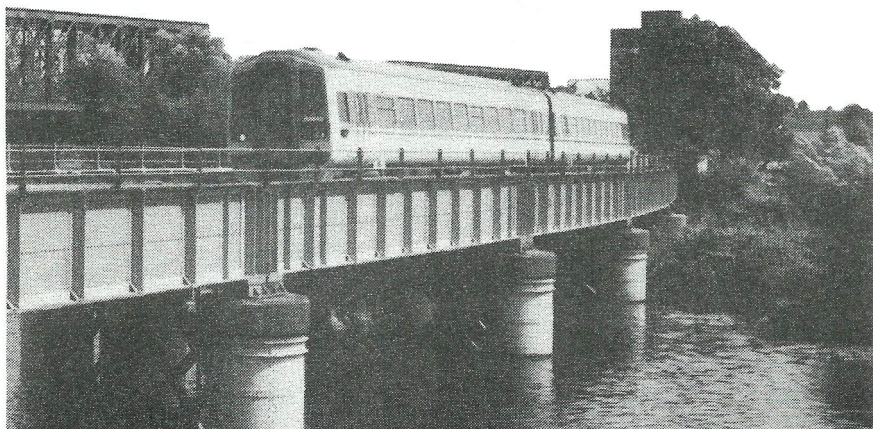


**SIMPLIFIED
DIAGRAM OF
THE CROSS-
COUNTRY ROUTE**

- at Peterborough for the North of England and Scotland, with the fastest ever Inter City trains to Edinburgh, now that this line too has been electrified. There are also good local connections through Lincolnshire, via Spalding, Sleaford, Lincoln, Gainsborough on to Doncaster
- at Nottingham for Sprinter services to other East Midlands destinations, including the line just re-opened to Newstead and shortly to be extended to Mansfield
- at Leicester for main line trains to important towns in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and, before long, for a re-opened passenger service on the Ivanhoe Line to Burton-on-Trent
- at Birmingham for a fast improving suburban service around the West Midlands, including the re-opened Cannock Line, plus through trains to Wales and the South West
- at Sheffield for major centres in South Yorkshire and for stations on the scenic Hope Valley Line
- at Manchester for the new Metrolink trams across the city centre and out to Bury and Altrincham, as well as to local rail services to many parts of the North West.

On the train

Not only do the Sprinter trains speed you from city centre to city centre (for instance, Norwich to Liverpool in 5½ hours by the fastest service), but they normally have a refreshment trolley for tea, coffee, cold drinks, sandwiches, etc. at your seat for all or part of the journey; you can sit at a table - seats are reservable. There is a public address system and, in the most modern class 158 trains, air-conditioning, and the ride is smoother than in the older trains. In the most modern ones, you can also telephone while the train is speeding along at up to 90 mph.



THE SPRINTER CROSSES THE RIVER NENE AT PETERBOROUGH ON THE EX MIDLAND RAILWAY BRIDGE AS IT IS ABOUT TO ENTER THE STATION. - SPEEDING WESTWARD.

From the same seat in the same train from Norwich to Liverpool you can view three fine medieval cathedrals, scenery ranging from Breckland forest via the vast open Fens to the rolling hills and stone cottages of Derbyshire; market towns of character and the centres of great industrial cities.

The Future?

This train service has been developed by British Rail's Regional Railways Sector during the past five years. It is the best cross-country service in terms of speed and frequency that there has ever been over these east-west routes.

But will it survive if the Government goes ahead with its plans to break up and sell off our national rail network?

The prospects are not good. The Department of Transport has spoken of breaking up Regional Railways Central Division (which runs these Sprinters) into "small manageable franchises." This could mean that all passengers between East Anglia and the Midlands will have to change at Peterborough, from one company's trains to another's. A journey from Norwich to Liverpool could involve several changes, as it usually did when the railways were privately owned before 1948.

There is no guarantee that the through Saver tickets which you can now buy for these journeys would be available after privatisation. You might have to book two or three separate tickets.

Public pressure has forced the Government to give way on Rail cards for the disabled, senior citizens and young people and to have a national timetable. It did not want to have to guarantee any of these after privatisation.

It must be pressed to make any private operator keep through trains and cheap through ticketing. In fact, as the Sprinters across England have been so successful, why should it not be British Rail that continues to run them?

Write to your MP and urge him or her to campaign to keep this valuable cross-country train service.

Published by the Railway Development Society - The independent voluntary organisation for rail users nationwide.

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