

SixShiresRail

Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire & Rutland

Newsletter for Railfuture East Midlands
& Lincolnshire branches

railfuture

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Closure of 'middle footbridge' at Nottingham station averted – for now

East Midlands Railway (EMR) announced on 31 January that from Saturday 22 February, access to the platforms from the middle footbridge at Nottingham station was to be closed. As well as a station footbridge, it is a public right of way across the station from Station Street on the north side to Queen's Road on the south. As such, the bridge has no ticket gates, meaning passengers can use it to bypass the ticket gates at the main station entrance.

This followed a three-week pilot exercise in November 2024, prompted by high levels of fare evasion. EMR state that an estimated £80,000 revenue loss was identified in that period, equating to £1.1m annually. They also claim improvements to security at the station, including three interventions to prevent potential suicides. EMR add that access to the tram at Station Street would be maintained.

Rail passengers would need to use the main station entrance on Carrington Street, and those changing trains at Nottingham would have to use the bridge by the ticket gates at that end of the station. As many Regional trains arrive and depart towards the east end of the station, passengers face a very long walk if needing to catch another train. Indeed, Nottingham station is sometimes playfully nicknamed

'Grantham West'!

EMR acknowledge that "The closure, which will be kept under review, will allow us to capture more data and evidence around the issue". At least two Nottingham MPs and the

City Council expressed concern about the closure.

Railfuture has repeatedly called for a new footbridge towards the eastern end of the station (with or without another entrance from or near London Road). We included this in our response to a consultation on the Nottingham Station Masterplan in October 2021. As an interim, we suggested dividing the



◀ existing footbridge in two, with a fence along the middle throughout its length. Access to all platforms would remain on one side, and the public right of way across the station would be maintained but sealed off from the platforms, subject to what happens at Platform 7.

However, following pressure from stakeholders including Railfuture, EMR rescinded the closure decision on 4 February. In a statement, they said “*We recognise the importance of ensuring that our*

proposals effectively consider those impacted by this change. To support this, we will not be closing access to the footbridge on Saturday 22 February, and instead, will be taking additional time to further assess the potential impact of our proposals.”

We stress that Railfuture fully supports efforts to tackle fare evasion and to improve station safety and security. However, the legitimate interests of passengers are also crucial at this important interchange hub. *Steve Jones*

December 2024 timetable changes for Crewe to Newark Castle route

From Monday, 15 December, East Midlands Railway (EMR) increased the number of services on its Crewe to Newark Castle route, helping to improve options for customers and better connect communities, by adding eight services and extending two weekday services.

Will Rogers, Managing Director at East Midlands Railway, said: “We’re always looking for better ways to match our timetable with the trips our customers want to make.

“But any changes need to take into account a number of factors, including the allocation of necessary funding, maintaining levels of performance (punctuality), and operational feasibility.

“Thankfully, these requirements have been met, and we are delighted to be able to provide a boost in services for our customers on the Crewe to Newark Castle line.

“It is great news for the communities of Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, as well as businesses up and down the line – especially on Saturdays.”

Full list of services added in the December timetable:

Weekdays

Extension of 08:10 Crewe–Nottingham to Newark Castle

13:10 Crewe – Newark Castle

10:36 Newark Castle – Crewe

Extension of 16:16 Nottingham – Crewe to Newark Castle

Saturdays

08:09 Crewe – Newark Castle

13:10 Crewe – Newark Castle

18:10 Crewe – Nottingham

06:44 Derby – Crewe

10:39 Newark Castle – Crewe

15:38 Newark Castle – Crewe



Missed Connections at Derby and Kettering

We have been concerned for some time about missed connections between EMR services at both Derby and Kettering.

At Derby, trains for Matlock may depart on time rather than await a slightly delayed Intercity train from London or CrossCountry train from Birmingham. However, they can then be held north of Derby station for the Intercity or CrossCountry train to go ahead on the main line before following behind it to Duffield and Belper and then the branch. The result is that, though dispatch from Derby may appear punctual, arrival at the branch stations is still delayed, and connecting passengers for these stations have to wait for the next train! Sometimes, the Intercity train's arrival at Derby is only marginally late but the need to cross the bridge between, say, Platforms 5 and 3 means that passengers still miss the Matlock train.

We have also had a recent report of the Matlock train departing ahead of a delayed train to Sheffield but proceeding ahead of it to Ambergate South Junction, causing further delay to the Intercity train. At least the passengers on the branch would have had a more punctual service.

Something similar is reportedly happening at Kettering; this time between southbound Intercity and Connect services. The Intercity trains use Platform 3, meaning that passengers for Connect trains to Wellingborough, Bedford and the other intermediate stations must cross over the footbridge to Platform 1. We have heard of southbound Connect trains departing on time, leaving insufficient time for passengers arriving on delayed Intercity trains to change platforms. Again, punctual departure of the Connect trains is, on the face of it, to be commended.



EMR Connect trains at Kettering



EMR Matlock branch service at Derby
Photos: Steve Jones

However, the Connect train can then be held south of Kettering for a path on the up fast line, allowing the Intercity train to pass first. Why not hold the Connect train in Platform 1 at Kettering and enable it to live up to its name?!

Admittedly, EMR Connect is a half-hourly service, so arguably the wait is not excessive if one is missed. However, it has generated complaints.

In both cases, connections are missed but with no apparent compensating benefit to passengers.

Have you experienced or witnessed this at Derby or Kettering – or similar practice anywhere else? If so, please let us know – east.midlands@railfuture.org.uk

Steve Jones

Could you contribute to the work of your local Community Rail Partnership?

North Notts & Lincs Community Rail Partnership (CRP) are seeking to recruit additional directors to join our board. You do not need to be an expert on railways, although some knowledge of the industry is helpful. The responsibilities of a director focus on effectively managing the CRP and its legal entity. Non-rail skills are highly valuable and can significantly contribute to the success of the NNLCRP. Your knowledge of the local area, combined with your ability to collaborate, shape organisational priorities, and support strategic decision-making, is what truly matters.

Whilst also assisting in the overall management of the partnership as an entity, and identifying opportunities of partnership working, the ability to work in a team environment, whilst also nurturing, supporting and collaborating with employed staff (our Community Rail Officers) also forms an integral part of the role.

The Board benefits from a diverse range of expertise among its directors and supporters. This includes skills in volunteer recruitment and management, finance and accountancy, corporate governance, data protection, legal matters, information technology (particularly website and database management), and marketing (including leveraging social media effectively).

Your time commitment as a minimum is attendance at board meetings four times a year, although if you wish there is also plenty of opportunity to work with our officers and take part in activities throughout the year.

The post of a director is voluntary but reasonable expenses for travel will be covered.

Recent activities of NNLCRP have included:

- Involving youth groups in designing artwork for Lincoln and Shireoaks stations
- Talking to groups about rail safety and careers in the rail industry
- Working with station adopters to develop and maintain station gardens
- Working with a group of vulnerable adults to open a station café
- Researching and producing information boards to celebrate 175 years of the opening of the Manchester, Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway.
- Taking vulnerable groups on ‘Try the train’ trips to give them confidence to travel by train.

For further information please contact the NNLCRP chair, David Harby. chair@nnlcrp.org.uk.



for your diary

Railfuture Lincolnshire Branch

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Saturday, 15 March 2025 at St. Mary le Wigford Church Hall, Lincoln LN5 7EQ
adjacent to Lincoln station
commencing at 12:30

Timetable:

- 12:00 Assemble
- 12:30 AGM (Agenda below)
- 14:00 Break
- 14:30 **Discussion Group introduced by David Harby on "A Growing Railway for a Growing Region"**
- 16:00 Meeting Closes

BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dear Member,

The Annual General Meeting of the branch will take place on Saturday, 15 March 2025 at St. Mary le Wigford Church Hall, St. Mary's Street, Lincoln LN5 7EQ

AGM AGENDA

1. Apologies
2. Minutes of 2024 meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Chairman's Report by David Harby
5. Hon. Secretary's Report by Dr Don Peacock
6. Financial Report – Branch Income & Expenditure Account
7. Election of Officers:
 - a) Chairman
 - b) Vice Chairman
 - c) Hon Secretary
 - d) other committee members
8. Any other urgent business (notice of items appreciated by Hon Secretary before meeting commences or telephone 01652 688549)

Yours sincerely, Don Peacock, Hon Secretary
1 Queens Road, Barnetby le Wold DN38 6JH. Tel: 01652 688549

No members contacted the Hon Secretary to stand for the posts of Chairman, Vice-Chairman, and Secretary and therefore there will be no candidates' statements published and no voting carried out at the AGM. Branch full members can volunteer to join the committee at the AGM.

Dr Don Peacock, Hon Secretary

JOINT CONFERENCE

East Anglia, Lincolnshire and East Midlands Branches

Thursday, 15 May 2025 commencing 12:00 – 16:30

at Peterborough Museum, Priestgate, Peterborough PE1 1LF

Including speakers from the rail industry, to be announced
plus a presentation by Barry Coward on the history of the BT Film Unit.

Advance booking essential through Eventbrite at:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/conferences/>



Chairman's Report for the 2025 AGM

Another year is passed and it's time for a review of the year. After looking back through my notes for 2024 and then reading some of my previous reports there is one common factor that is there every year and that is my frustration about how long it takes for anything on the railway to change. Throughout 2023 industrial relations were having an effect in the background even when there was no actual industrial action. Planning future journeys, especially a UK holiday, was always something of a gamble in that the plans could be wrecked at the last minute due to a strike. This situation continued into 2024 but, thankfully, most of the disputes were resolved during the summer early enough to have minimal effect on the summer season at Skegness. There are still some ongoing disputes in other parts of the country but none in our local area.

The predominant cause now of disruption is where services rely heavily on rest day working especially in the North West where the vast majority of train-crew contracts are Monday to Fridays with all weekend work voluntary. Resolving this problem and getting all staff to agree to move over to 7 day contracts is going to have major cost implications so I fear we are not going to see it settled anytime soon. Even when all train-crew are on 7 day contracts that does not always mean there are no longer any cancellations, as can be seen from the current situation with Northern services from Sheffield.

Mass ticket office closure proposals were dropped before the end of 2023 but that still leaves another long running issue to be sorted and that is ticket reform. Sorting out the myriad types of ticket and complications of getting value for money fares has been a campaign target for many years. However, reform is not as simple as it sounds. Government will expect reform to be at least revenue neutral and, with the current emphasis on reducing Government spending, it is likely they will be looking for hidden fare increases.

One possible solution to ticket reform is selling only single leg tickets. We have seen more of this introduced by LNER during 2024 and from what I have seen, I can't say that I have any confidence in the passenger being any better off, especially if they have to make a last minute decision to travel and want to purchase a walk on ticket.

For the past 30 years, at least, Lincolnshire has been the poor relation when service levels are considered. We had a brief period of optimism when the EMR franchise was awarded and we were finally promised hourly services on all our local routes. Something that is taken for granted as a minimum anywhere else in the country. Covid was a valid reason to delay the implementation of these hourly services but they should still have been implemented by now. The fact that they haven't just shows that Lincolnshire is yet again being denied what everyone else thinks of as normal. North Lincolnshire is treated no better with the promised hourly Scunthorpe to Doncaster service still every other hour. There are currently some proposals for improvement including half hourly between Lincoln and Nottingham. You can rest assured that your chairman has supported these whenever he has had the opportunity.

For some years the Barton branch enjoyed a 07:00 and 08:00 departure followed thereafter every two hours until 10pm. This was made possible by hiring in a TPE unit. When this became unavailable in May 2021, the 08:00 was withdrawn. EMR have now reversed this situation for the December 2024 timetable change and the 06:00 now waits at Barton for an hour before departing at 08:00. This is particularly frustrating to workers for New Holland having a serviceable train in the station not going anywhere, while they try to find other means to go just three miles to work. A difficult dilemma to resolve and as a branch we are taking advice from the experts on the spot – Friends of the Barton Line.

As far as service reliability is concerned, during 2024 EMR had a period during summer and autumn when cancellations due to unit failure were far too frequent. We raised this with EMR and were assured that the problems were due to delays in the contract to upgrade the DMU shed at Etches Park depot and that matters would improve as soon as the upgraded facilities were available. Services have generally improved recently with the notable exception of the Barton branch where the situation is still dire. Not all the fault of EMR as there have been frequent signal and points failures which is surprising for an area where Network Rail spent a lot of money only a

◀ few years ago. When EMR do have unit failures on Barton services, the situation is difficult to resolve quickly due to the nearest replacement unit often being at Nottingham.

TPE services have improved markedly during the year, after a dire 2023. The new management at TPE have clearly got to grips with the situation.

The same cannot be said for Northern, where if anything, cancellations have gone from bad to worse during the year. Northern have had high levels of sickness for most of the year which has severely impacted on their services. An unsatisfactory situation but I must give Northern credit for keeping us informed as to the difficulties they were encountering and not making promises of an early resolution they knew they couldn't keep.

Finally we come to LNER, where Lincoln services are clearly seen as disposable. Whenever LNER have disruption it is always the Lincoln services that are first to be cancelled. An additional complication is that with Lincoln not having electrification, the service needs a bimode unit so at times of disruption we often see an all electric unit used with it being terminated at Newark Northgate. The only benefit for passengers is that the bus replacement seats from Lincoln are at least more comfortable, even if the bus replacement is a double decker from a school service!

Seat reservations on the Poacher Line services during the summer holidays were again imposed by EMR. There are winners and losers with the winners mainly being those passengers who booked in advance and were then assured of a seat. Families with young children and the less able were, if they booked in advance, assured of a seat on their selected train rather than their experiences previous to 2023 of having to turn up very early and stand in a queue hoping for a seat. I saw the operation at Nottingham a few times during the summer and my observation was that it worked well. Staff at Nottingham told me the same. This didn't surprise me as the plans were not that different to the seat regulation rules that operated successfully on summer holiday services from the Midlands to East Coast resorts for many years.

Another trial at Nottingham this year, which was not so popular, was when EMR implemented a pilot project to prevent passengers from platforms 1 – 6 using the middle footbridge to exit the station or even move between platforms. Customers needing to reach these platforms or the NET tram platforms had to use the station's front entrance. The reason given was to reduce fare evasion and ticketless travel. However, this footbridge is a public right of way between Station Street (beside the NET tram access) and Queens Road (accessed from platform 7), so EMR were prevented from closing off access from platform 7. That meant a determined fare evader could still avoid the ticket gates by using this as an exit. Railfuture made clear our view was that the best way to combat fare evasion was to have effective on train ticket checking.

A major project in 2024 in conjunction with East Midlands branch has been the production of a leaflet setting out our Rail Priorities for the East Midlands. During 2025 we intend to expand on this by developing leaflets looking at some of the priorities in more detail.

The branch was again represented at Caistor Rail Show.

There are three major infrastructure projects being considered for Lincolnshire: Mablethorpe Nuclear Waste Facility; a barrier across the Wash and a reservoir to the south of Sleaford. We are keeping a close watch on all of these, as rail enhancements may be needed if any go ahead.

As chairman I would like to thank all my fellow branch officers and committee who have contributed to the branch activities during the year. Meetings do take time to organise, rooms have to be booked, minutes take time to write and, not forgetting especially, the effort that goes into writing articles for the branch newsletter plus the editing and distribution. All these tasks are done on a voluntary basis by members who at the same time have other personal responsibilities. This is in addition to the time they spend representing Railfuture at meetings with outside bodies. Many of these are held away from Lincolnshire and attendance at them frequently takes all day.

With this in mind I make no apologies for my regular annual appeal for you all to try to recruit new members so we have new blood coming along to replace the current committee as we start to find our bodies are telling us it is time to retire. There are other Railfuture branches with an aged committee which are now almost dormant following the sudden death of key officers. I wouldn't like to see this happen in Lincolnshire.

David Harby

Hon. Secretary's Report for the 2025 AGM

From David's report you will have seen that it has been another busy year.

I have had no response to the request for nominations and so there will be no elections at the AGM, the officers, committee members and corresponding members will be elected "en bloc". However, if any member would like to volunteer for the committee at the meeting they can do so.

It is very disappointing to keep reporting this lack of offers of taking part.

One of our members, Ann Hindley has transferred to the Yorkshire Branch, but remains with us in a liaising capacity. I would like to thank her for all the work she has done on behalf of the committee and expect that her role of liaising between the Lincolnshire and Yorkshire Branch committees will be a benefit to both.

We have continued to respond to various consultations.

There will be an AGM in March in Lincoln.

There will not be an invited speaker at the AGM this year **all** the membership will be asked to contribute to a discussion on the recent combined East Midlands and Lincolnshire Branches leaflet "A Growing Railway for a Growing Region". As I write this, I hope it will be included in a reminder e-mail sent out to members about 2 weeks before the AGM.

Last but not least, many thanks to the committee for all the time and effort that they have put in under rather testing times.

Finally, a repeat of David's request for more members to join the committee to help spread the load.

I hope that you are all well and will enjoy an improving 2025.

Dr Don Peacock Hon Secretary

29 January 2025. (Happy Chinese New Year, the Year of the Snake started today)

Railfuture Lincolnshire Branch					
Income and Expenditure Account for the Year Ending 31 December 2024					
	Income			Expenditure	
	2023	2024		2023	2024
	£	£		£	£
Opening balance at 1 st January	938.77	650.85	Newsletter printing and distribution*	509.38	630.50
Funding from national funds*	0.00	500.00	AGM costs	56.00	55.90
Sales	0.00	20.00	Cost of sales (postage)	6.99	0.00
Donations	309.45	0.00	Campaigns:		
			Stand at Caistorail	20.00	30.00
			Membership of BCCRP	5.00	5.00
			East Midlands rail priorities leaflet*	0.00	235.40
			Closing balance at 31 st December	650.85	214.05
	1,248.22	1,170.85		1,248.22	1,170.85

Notes:

Funding available from national funds is agreed in advance but not credited to the branch account until (if) it is needed.

*Newsletter and rail priorities leaflet were produced jointly with East Midlands branch. Paid for by Lincolnshire branch with appropriate joint funding from national funds paid to Lincolnshire branch.

The Peaks and Dales Line Feasibility Study Update

*Campaign led by Manchester and East Midlands Rail Action Partnership
MEMRAP*

The MEMRAP campaign was formally established in 2019; however, the last six months of 2024 have seen significant progress in taking the campaign to an established position with the Department for Transport (DfT), through developing the feasibility study in line with the Better Value Rail (BVR) process.

Whilst still relatively new, the BVR process was established as a toolkit for all those in early stages of developing transport infrastructure projects to support better decision-making, identify the right solutions and save time and money.

The Peaks and Dales Line MEMRAP team has a close working relationship with DfT and as the first main line reinstatement progressing through the scheme is also supporting the BVR team in ‘testing’ the process. So far DfT have made several updates to their process as a result of the Peaks and Dales Line team feedback.

Once completed, which it is hoped will be late Q1 2025, DfT will assess the study and provide feedback, and with a positive business case expected, work will continue into the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC). The BVR represents around 85% of the SOBC.

“The BVR process enables us to demonstrate not just talk about what might happen with the reinstated railway”, says John Harpur, MEMRAP Chair. “It is only possible to progress through the various business case processes if there is a positive business case. For too long, a dated study from 2004 (Scott Wilson) has been quoted,

and what all the communities along the line need to know is if these proposals are going to happen”.

Ensuring the communities are engaged in the process is a critical part of the project work being undertaken by the Peaks and Dales Line team. In autumn 2024, after working with a couple of organisations including a charity, and direct engagement with over 500 community residents, MEMRAP launched their Community Teams initiative.

Recognising that the communities along the whole route can significantly contribute to the reinstatement proposals, as well as be a conduit for information sharing, using a tried and tested methodology, there have been six groups established. These include several highly motivated and supportive community members who directly communicate with MEMRAP and contribute in a positive way to the overall campaign.

MEMRAP is a combination of rail and non-rail professionals, bringing together a wealth of experience to ensure the project is delivered to the project plan, and they have recently introduced much needed processes and procedures to ensure members, volunteers and the team are working safely and are protected when undertaking work for the project.

“We have seen an increase in contributions from our members”, says Nigel Kavanagh-Brown, one of the MEMRAP Directors. “Both in meetings and through our member support process, we have secured hours of additional support from those that can assist us, which will ensure we have accurate and up to date information for the future business cases”.

◀ In 2024, the project team also secured confirmed support from six Members of Parliament along the route, with John Whitby, MP for Derbyshire Dales, now writing to Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill, the Transport Minister, on behalf of most of these MPs in support of the MEMRAP Peaks



Dale Line proposals. Further meetings with additional MPs are planned over the coming weeks.

The priority for now is finalising the demand forecasting, which is ongoing, and completing the main part of the BVR submission, to identify the return on investment data, which will enable evidence-based information to be provided both to communities and to stakeholders.

“Overwhelmingly across all the communities”, continues John, “the message we hear is they need to know when something will happen. For too long the story has been about the problems of having no rail service and

what the solutions may be and now for the first time we will soon be able to share specific ideas, getting communities involved to a greater level in planning for the future return of rail, all of course subject to the business case being positive”.

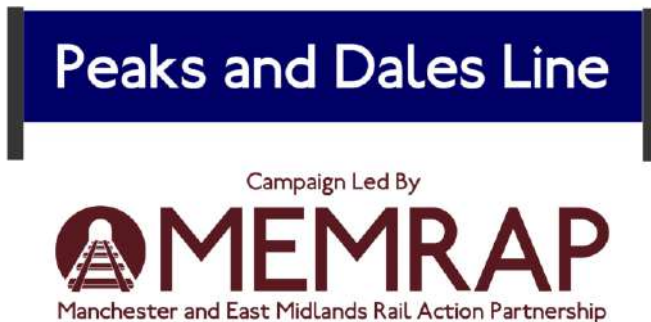
The timing could not be better for the team, with a huge

increase in political and community support, and changes to both the planning processes, and the business case processes all proving to be beneficial to the modelling and outputs being evaluated by the team.

Other plans for early 2025 include a website update to reflect all the positive outputs achieved so far, with the team explaining that the average monthly visitors to the website since April 2024 has increased from around 100 to 1,300 per month.

If you are interested in finding out more about the project, then visit www.peaksanddalesline.co.uk

Steve Jones



A look at station footfall in 2023-24

The annual station usage figures were released in December. These are for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024. They are compiled for the Office of Rail and Road and there is a link to their data portal at the end of this article. Not only can you see the current statistical release but also a table of usage for each station going back as far as 1997.

In general, the picture is very mixed. Some stations were back almost to pre-Covid levels, with some even exceeding them, but for others the recovery is much slower. In the following paragraphs I have attempted to put some context to the figures.

Below is a table listing the main stations in our area as well as a few smaller stations that have been included to illustrate points made in this article. I have compared 2023/24 with 2022/23 and 2019/20, which shows the recovery, or not in some cases, since before Covid. It must be borne in mind that these figures are for the period ending ten months ago so do not include summer 2024.

During 2023/24, we continued to endure a lot of industrial action on our rail network so even though the figures are higher than 2022/23, I do wonder if the figures would have been above 2019/20 levels if there had been a reliable service throughout the year.

Cleethorpes and Scunthorpe were two stations hit especially badly by industrial action in 2022/23 with a TPE service that was so unreliable many potential passengers just gave up using rail. Reliability was rather better in 2023/24, and passenger numbers have recovered somewhat. It will be interesting to see the 2024/25 figures now the new TransPennine Express (TPE) management have got to grips with many

of the factors which were affecting reliability.

The rail replacement bus service every two hours between Scunthorpe and Doncaster returned to rail in December 2022 but this was still only two-hourly rather than the pre-Covid hourly service. As can be seen by the figures for Crowle, some passengers have returned but numbers are still half what they were in 2019/20. Locals tell me that the bus was very unpopular so rather than rely on the bus they found alternatives, with many driving to Thorne North to get the hourly train service from Hull. Clearly, this alternative is still preferable to the reinstated rail service.

The effect of East Midlands Railway (EMR) not reinstating all their services on Regional routes can be seen, with Burton Joyce being used to demonstrate how passenger numbers collapse when a regular service is replaced by fewer trains at irregular intervals. The final missing trains in the pre-Covid hourly Newark Castle to Crewe service have, however, been reinstated from December 2024. It remains to be seen how quickly passengers return to the intermediate stations. If Crowle can be taken as an example, then recovery will be slow.

The slow recovery at Hykeham in 2022/23 showed how the actions of just one employer could make a difference. Pre-Covid, there were at least 50 passengers per day travelling by rail to the video game software company based near Hykeham station. It was not until spring 2023 that they started to require their staff to return to the office instead of working from home and the effect of this can be seen in the 2023/24 figures. The passenger survey last summer highlighted, however, that there are still plenty of commuters from Hykeham to ►

◀ Newark and Nottingham who are hybrid working.

When ‘commuters’ are being discussed, the assumption of many is that these are primarily paid workers. This is not always a correct assumption. Lincoln, Saxilby and Gainsborough Lea Road, for example, have significant numbers of students as regular commuters and this goes some way to explain why those stations are now above pre-Covid levels. No doubt readers will see other examples in their area in the ORR data table.

Mention of commuters leads me into discussing season tickets. We regularly hear that sales of these have collapsed. I still have a copy of the 2013/14 data, so in the table I have compared season tickets usage between 2013/14 and 2023/24. As can be seen, season ticket use at the MML and ECML stations is now half, at best, of what it was 10 years ago. When we remember that these will be significant revenue generators for the operators, we can see where a recovery in passenger numbers does not automatically translate to a recovery in revenue. The rail industry has introduced part-time season tickets, in the hope of attracting people who only travel into the office two or three days a week. However, these have been widely criticised as poor value for money, with part-time commuters often buying Day Travelcards or other day or advance tickets instead. Such tickets are classified as ‘Leisure’ travel, which is a distortion of the actual purpose of many rail journeys.

There is one station where season ticket use has boomed and that is Hykeham. This is explained by the service being transformed from a few trains per day at irregular times to a regular hourly service along with an

office park and large housing estate being developed alongside the station. An unusual example in that, instead of the train service improvement lagging behind the property development, in this case the train service was improved whilst the development was taking place, so new residents and workers had the public transport option from day one.

Another station where usage has boomed is Corby, reflecting the continued growth in the town plus the success of the EMR Connect electric train service. Indeed, insufficient car-parking at the station is a hot local issue.

Two small stations in the Derby area are included in the table: Belper and Peartree. Belper has an all-day service on the Matlock branch, plus a small number of calls by main-line services to and from Sheffield. Peartree is in a built-up area on the south side of Derby but has a very sparse train service. Its usage comfortably exceeds pre-Covid levels but is still low. With more station calls it could achieve much more.

Finally, and ‘just a bit of fun’, as they say on election night TV coverage, is Elton & Orston. This is included as the least-used station in the joint Branches’ area. It became famous as the least-used station on the whole network in 2021-22, with only 40 entries and exits in the whole year, reflecting its deeply rural position and minimal train service. Usage had increased more than five-fold by 2023-24, however, as enthusiasts sought to show the station some love!

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage>

David Harby

Estimates of station usage				Season tickets	
Station	2019-2020	2022-2023	2023-2024	Seasons 2013/14	Seasons 2023/24
Beeston	574,304	439,410	518,670		36,604
Belper	236,080	168,490	180,154		11,100
Burton Joyce	15,330	9,426	11,014	882	354
Cleethorpes	274,032	194,646	252,632	4,780	2,250
Corby	301,588	402,244	498,620		42,760
Crowle	26,898	5,770	13,758	3,410	2,560
Derby	4,220,014	3,377,304	3,496,066	581,714	166,250
Doncaster	3,946,406	3,634,522	3,915,952	677,850	309,090
East Midlands Parkway	343,420	309,864	326,786		13,210
Elton & Orston	68	56	212		0
Gainsborough Lea Road	174,122	168,940	184,600	24,596	9,446
Grantham	1,390,648	1,260,424	1,278,244	330,510	136,946
Hinckley	349,874	235,416	302,284	97,078	23,838
Hykeham	183,026	113,218	157,070	8,810	22,368
Kettering	1,032,982	1,007,900	1,063,076	429,470	202,628
Leicester	5,322,728	4,869,836	5,303,830	1,072,346	385,434
Lincoln	1,966,100	1,833,930	2,059,670	206,910	97,822
Loughborough	1,331,286	1,227,122	1,287,300		125,556
Mansfield	395,920	302,542	313,788		21,458
Matlock	223,250	174,240	190,206	22,130	7,684
Market Harborough	898,058	762,792	882,598	305,408	147,122
Newark Castle	759,898	507,760	548,968	41,284	44,912
Newark Northgate	909,804	885,538	957,410	205,022	78,326
Nottingham	7,864,690	6,739,558	7,144,540	923,630	318,112
Peartree	3,892	4,374	4,354		218
Peterborough	4,934,692	4,519,016	4,720,686	1,108,710	366,420
Retford	541,674	519,868	546,108	70,220	28,544
Saxilby	75,654	76,160	76,254	6,336	6,812
Scunthorpe	396,638	253,186	325,412	44,370	15,534
Sileby	124,242	109,414	134,392		26,534
Skegness	323,202	359,744	358,304	20,416	4,660
Stamford	366,652	247,698	296,664	76,816	24,048

Syston	232,064	149,102	182,754		34,012
Uttoxeter	165,784	144,270	160,532	12,194	6,236
Wellingborough	917,400	738,900	867,608		178,558
Worksop	474,830	420,094	456,672	100,170	25,448

<https://dataportal.orr.gov.uk/statistics/usage/estimates-of-station-usage>

David Harby

Friends of the Barton Line

Our December timetable has come with a difficult compromise; the first weekday service out of Barton to Cleethorpes now departs (in round figures) at 8am instead of 7am.

Until May 2021 we enjoyed a 7am and 8am departure followed thereafter every two hours until 10pm.

A run in each direction neatly takes one hour including turnaround time at each end. So the initial hourly interval with just one unit was made possible by hiring an idle TransPennine Express (TPE) unit for the first return run. From May 2021 this arrangement was no longer possible and so either the 7am or the 8am service had to be withdrawn.

The dilemma has been that the 7am service was convenient for workers at New Holland – and there had been a good dozen before the service reliability deteriorated – and for people arriving to make onward connections to Hull or departing to make onward connections at Habrough, whereas the 8am departure was preferred for people going to work or appointments in Grimsby.

Taking the pros and cons into consideration, EMR chose to retain the 7am and withdraw the 8am departures.

Now, from the December 2024 timetable, the decision has been reversed, i.e. retain the 6am departure from Cleethorpes to arrive at Barton at

7am but not to let it depart for Cleethorpes until 8am. This means having the unit stand idle at Barton for fifty minutes. This will be particularly frustrating to workers for New Holland having a serviceable train in the station not going anywhere while they try to find other means to go just three miles to work.

It has been suggested that a minibus service be provided from Barton to New Holland. However, we are suggesting that the train departs at 7am stopping at all stations to Ulceby (where reversing on the two-way platform would not be a problem) and then back to Barton in good time for its 8am departure. This would at least retain the service as it was before for the five stations on the northern end of the line. We await a response from the TOC.

At the end of 2024, the line suffered a multitude of performance issues, including late opening of signal boxes, track circuit failures, no guard or driver and faults of units. Some relating to knock-on effects in other parts of the network. It is understood the Office of Rail and Road has written to Network Rail seeking to improved performance to both passenger and freight services in the Eastern Region.

Anthony Berridge

Opposite on page 15: plaque at Cleethorpes station commemorating Sir Edward Watkin
Photo: Tim Mickleburgh

Experiencing connections

I can't add too much as I do not use either of the connections on a regular basis, though one of my most enjoyable changes at Kettering was in the company of two Freightliner drivers and a great conversation about Tunstead and Doveholes services.

I have certainly enjoyed the delights of leaving Derby for Matlock ahead of the "connecting" ex-St Pancras service, which was made even later as a result. Anecdote from EMR train staff agrees with us and suggests that: (1) there is no set policy for the connection at Derby and (2) It would help everyone if there was.

The situation gets ever more chaotic once you cross over the TOC as part of the change. This happens for me at Tamworth fairly regularly. The situation is so messy that a delay repay can be delayed if you choose the wrong claim TOC (at least, in the eyes of the one you claim from). In the most recent incident, there had been a minor landslip that was delaying WMT trains south of Tamworth. XC was not impressed when I chose to claim

through them, but the reason was not the landslip. Had the staff member (train manager) been on top of their job, they would have known of the delay, told me to stay on the train, where my WMT only ticket was in fact now validated for onward from Brum with Avanti. Had the information been correctly offered before I disembarked, it is likely there would have been no claim at all under delay repay. As it was, delay > 60 minutes at Euston.

The homeward leg was also an hour late in the absence of a held connection between a late running WMT from Euston and the connecting XC. In this case the next service that appeared (as distinct from what was scheduled) was an hour later. I find that Tamworth station staff appear consistently well briefed and know exactly what is going on. As the rush hour XC deposits many tens of passengers into the narrow stair well, the few trying to connect upwards via the same stairs can only wave at the departing train. Staff are clearly not empowered or authorised to do anything about this – that's a management issue to resolve.

Not much of this is within scope of EMR connections as stated, but I bet these observations are seen elsewhere on EMR too. I feel that the Tamworth situation shows up the need for a policy rethink – as we leave the era of functional TOC silos behind in the coming years. A dash of staff training to supplement would not come amiss. The difference between some staff exhibiting, for their grade, both top tier and needs improvement behaviours were all on display at Tamworth that day.

I hope that this is of interest.

Stephen@thepeakrail.org



Communicating with members

From time to time we have information to pass on to members which is too urgent to leave until the next issue of *SixShiresRail*. Until now separate emails have been sent to East Midlands and Lincolnshire branch members. This often duplicates a task as similar messages are being sent to members of each branch. To simplify matters, we propose, in future, to send the same email to members of both branches. In most instances the information is relevant to all, but if you feel otherwise we ask you to bear with us in the interests of reducing the time our volunteers spend on administration so they have more time for campaigning

David Harby

EDITOR'S COMMENT

As *SixShiresRail* is published only three times a year, with a gap of four months between issues, it is a rare occasion when the content is up-to-date and topical. *SSR6* is an exception as the front page features the latest news on the closure of the middle footbridge at Nottingham station, which was released as I prepared this edition. Also included are reports for the Lincolnshire Branch AGM on 15 March and the latest station usage figures, plus an update on the Peaks & Dales Line. To include these, I have had to hold over to *SSR7* an article about the East West Rail Line by Richard Bradford.

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FUTURE LINCOLNSHIRE BRANCH COMMITTEE MEETINGS


Wednesday, 16 July, 8 October 2025 and 14 January 2026. Venues to be arranged.

Non committee members are welcome to attend as observers.

www.railfuture.org.uk

Direct link to Branch News visit:

<https://www.railfuture.org.uk/Lincolnshire+Branch>

Follow the Branch on  (Formerly Twitter)
[@RailfutureLincs](https://twitter.com/RailfutureLincs)

SixShiresRail 7 will be published in June.

Please let the Editor, Phil Mason, 10 Cottesmore Close, Grantham NG31 9JL, phil.mason@railfuture.org.uk **have copy by 24 May.**

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