

And the dubious award for most bashed bridge in Britain goes to...

November 16, 2022



With the recent bridge strike in Ketton still fresh in everyone's mind and set to continue causing disruption for week, Network Rail has issued a warning to drivers, as heavy good traffic on the roads hots up in preparation for the Christmas shopping rush.

They have released a dubious roll of honour of the 'most bashed bridge' in the country, with the Stonea Road bridge, on the B1098 in Cambridgeshire taking the top spot.



And the winner is... Stonea Road bridge! The most bashed in Britain.

The unfortunate bridge was struck an unbelievable 33 times in the year ending March 2022, amounting to £10,526 in unnecessary train delay and cancellation costs. The other “big hitters” on the list include Lower Downs Road in Wimbledon, South West London, and Harlaxton Road bridge, Lincolnshire – struck 18 and 17 times respectively.

The latest figures come as Network Rail launches a new animation as part of its ongoing ‘Wise Up, Size Up’ campaign, reminding lorry drivers and haulage operators to take better care by knowing the height of their vehicles and choosing suitable routes before they head out on journeys. The retro-inspired cartoon centres on three high-sided vehicles navigating a low bridge in increasingly wacky ways, from pole-vaulting over it, to tunnelling underneath it. The animation is designed to warn HGV drivers that life is not like the cartoons and to take a moment to think before taking a risk when approaching low bridges.

Network Rail works with a number of railway industry partners to tackle bridge strikes, including Highways England, the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and hauliers. While incidents have reduced in recent years, numbers have steadily started to creep up again – coinciding with an estimated increase in traffic volume on Britain’s roads. Overall, provisional estimates show motor vehicles travelled 318.6 billion vehicle miles in Great Britain from April 2021 to March 2022 – a 29.7% increase compared to the year ending March 2021. Lorry traffic, in particular, increased by 10.1% to 17.8 billion vehicle miles.

Sir Peter Hendy CBE, chair of Network Rail said: “Bridge bashers cause serious safety issues on the

transport network for both road and rail users. Every incident can delay tens of thousands of passengers while we inspect the bridge and repair any damage – creating a huge cost from public funds.

“During this very busy time of year for deliveries, we urge operators and drivers to properly plan their routes, know the height of their vehicles and be vigilant for road signs showing the height of bridges. We will report those who don’t to the Traffic Commissioners, and they risk losing their licenses and livelihoods. Network Rail always looks to recover the entire repair and delay costs from the driver and the operator.”

Network Rail’s 4E’s initiative – education, engineering, enablement and enforcement – aims to ensure haulage companies and their drivers are provided with the knowledge and tools they need to avoid striking bridges. As part of this ongoing initiative, Network Rail has a team of bridge strike ‘champions’ covering each route across Britain, who raise awareness of the issue by visiting haulage companies and lead in managing bridge strike risk locally.