

How school work experience led to a railway career for Norwich's first female train driver

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The story of how one of Greater Anglia's first female drivers started a career on the railway, after two weeks' work experience at school, is highlighted in the latest episode of [Greater Anglia's Life on Rails podcast](#).

Sarah Swanston is a right time railway manager at [Greater Anglia](#), responsible for continuous punctuality improvements. She was put off from joining the police by her father and so, instead, she opted for the railway with the hopes of becoming a train driver.

Since joining on a Youth Training Scheme at the age of 16, Sarah has never looked back, she tells the Life on Rails podcast.

After carrying out a number of jobs and completing driver assessments, she became a "Train (wo)man Driver" and fully qualified as a driver in 1997, starting on routes out of Norwich.

Her career progressed to driving other routes, instructing trainee train drivers and then moving into management.

You can listen to the podcast to hear Sarah's fascinating reflections on becoming the first female train driver based in Norwich and the sound advice her grandmother gave her on hearing she was joining the railway.

The podcast includes interviews with other guests giving an insight into life at Greater Anglia – as well as a “travel surgery” segment with one of the region's local TV stars, David Whiteley, presenter for ITV Anglia news.

David reveals his dream day in East Anglia, as presenters Juliette Maxam and Lucy Wright, from Greater Anglia, question him to work out his ideal destination on the Greater Anglia network.

More fascinating facts revealed on the podcast include why getting new trains involved installing brighter lights and new signs at stations across the network, as Greater Anglia's client and programme director Andrew Goodrum talks about what was necessary to get the network ready for new trains.

Greater Anglia site manager Phil Hogg speaks on location from a wildlife garden at Norwich station which includes a honeybee hotel he made from old scraps which were destined for the bin and outlines further plans for schemes to boost local biodiversity.

The podcast's resident fares guru, Ken Strong, explains how to buy a cheap ticket online and Juliette and Lucy talk about travelling on busy trains – from tactics for finding a seat to keeping safe.

Juliette Maxam, senior media and PR manager at Greater Anglia, said: “We think this is a cracking episode with a really interesting mix of guests.

“Why not listen to it next time you're travelling with Greater Anglia to discover what goes on behind the scenes and get ideas for your next leisure trip.

“Lucy and I would love to hear what you'd like us to cover in future episodes. Please tweet us @GreaterAngliaPR.”

The podcast is available on all the usual podcast platforms and also Greater Anglia's website greateranglia.co.uk/podcast and Facebook page.