



Railway Development NEWS

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July 1982

DON'T SCUTTLE THE RAILWAYS!

That was the introductory theme of retiring Chairman, R. V. Banks, when addressing the Society's A.G.M., held in Reading on 24th April. To a record attendance of well over 50 members crammed into the BRSA Club he compared the Government's approach to investment in British Railways with that of the British Navy.

We live, he said, in difficult and uncertain times and there was need for peace all round. Firstly peace in the Falklands' crisis which has thrown everything into confusion and secondly peace in the ASLEF/BRB dispute which is still not settled. The dispute has, of course given the anti-rail lobby a field day, even to the extent of bringing Lord Beeching out of retirement to say how right he was in the 1960s and that, amongst other things, there was no need for more than one route from London to Scotland. So Watch Out! for another Beeching type operation and be prepared to resist it.

With the Centre for Policy Studies publishing a booklet by our old friend Dalglish suggesting yet again the conversion of rail into road there was a need for some comic relief in life and this certainly provided it. Unfortunately, however, such ideas are taken seriously by some people in high places and in this connection it appears that Mrs. Thatcher's dislike for Nationalised Industries inhibits the Government when it comes to railway expansion and investment. By so doing she is hitting at a nationalised industry unaware that other sufferers are important sections of *private* industry such as those which provide railway equipment which need a steady home market to support exports such as that provided by British Rail.

With a buoyant home market it can more successfully cope with foreign competition for the enormous amount of equipment which is needed (and being demanded) in many parts of the world for railway development. This is indeed the "age of the train" throughout the world and this country, the pioneers of railways ought to be playing a major part in this important export field. So Maggie — don't cut off your private industry nose to spite your nationalised industry face, and don't make the same mistake with the railways that appears to have been done with the navy which in time of need has had to scrape together a fleet much of which was due to be sold abroad or for scrap.

If our railway system is similarly run down (as seems likely) we could be in the same boat when the next energy crisis hits us. So come on Maggie — give the go-ahead for a massive injection of capital for electrification of our railways and other improvements to their infrastructure — in the national interest. Let us also have a quick decision to build a rail Channel Tunnel to link our railway network with that of Europe, giving it one of the greatest boosts of all time and thereby easing the pressure on our roads to the ports.

To politicians of all parties we say — stop using the railways as a political football and agree to plan sensibly for the future needs of the country. Rest assured the Railway Development Society will play its part in making sure that transport will be a major issue at the next General Election. Meanwhile there are rumours of drastic cuts imminent in rural rail services and this is where our local branches and associated local Rail Users' Groups can fight successful battles for their retention. Their strength is emphasised by the many highly successful conferences which have been held to date (the latest of which is reported elsewhere in this issue) and which should go a long way to ensure much greater support for railways than in the past.

Perhaps those M.P.s who have been so vociferous in fighting for their rural car-owning constituents (when higher petrol duties are proposed) can be persuaded to be as energetic in fighting for better public transport for those without the use of a car. Will they fight as vigorously for the retention of local rail services which may be threatened or be seen merely to be the mouthpieces of a powerful road lobby.

"Modern Railways" has recently reported further improvements to the London—Witham—Braintree service which was once threatened with complete closure — but for a determined group of local people who fought for its future. That it has been developed and electrified speaks for their success. Had it been closed and ripped up the expanding town of Braintree may not be so prosperous as it is now. There is indeed a growing awareness that many past rail closures were wrong not only for the railways themselves but for the people they served. The fight to prevent similar mistakes in the future must continue and the trend to be reversed to the extent of re-instatement of services where a demand exists. This is now much easier with the aid of the Act (promoted by Tony Speller M.P. last year) and the Society's Re-openings Committee will be active in seeing that it is made to work. Remember Braintree!

On a different tack we hear a lot about dearer and dearer fares being a deterrent to rail travel but they are not the main cause as the public are prepared to pay *provided* they receive a frequent, clean and reliable service and in any case many people now travel on one of the range of "reduced fares," which — allowing for inflation — compare very favourably with those of the 1930s.

In conclusion Mr Banks stressed that whilst we live in difficult times these must eventually improve and the Railway Development Society must be ready to play its full part in the fight for the retention and development of our railway services. Some may say that our Society (since its inception in 1978) has not made as much progress as it should and as Chairman he had endeavoured to raise its status as a well-informed and responsible pressure group. On the whole we had succeeded and with the continued support of many dedicated and active members (on our National Committee; in Branches and as local Representatives) under a new Chairman it should continue to grow in influence in the field of transport.

In thanking colleagues who had worked so hard in various capacities to further our aims it was not easy to mention individuals and would in fact take too long to do so but the information published in "Railway Development News" and the "Members' Handbook" was a clear indication of the extent of their endeavours — all voluntary and carried out on a tight budget. For those not so active their membership alone was vital and the donations which many add to their subscriptions (as witnessed in the Annual Accounts) was of inestimable value.

Later in the proceedings Mr Banks was unanimously elected the Society's first President and received a standing ovation. A few days earlier about 30 members and guests — mostly from the National Committee and the London & Home Counties Branch — had had the pleasure of entertaining him to dinner at the National Liberal Club to commemorate his retirement and we only regret that lack of time and money precluded this event being advertised to members more widely.

ANTI-CLOSURE FUND

Following a Resolution passed at the Society's A.G.M. held in Reading on 24th April, a collection of £26.50 was taken, with which a deposit account has been opened for the ANTI-CLOSURE FUND. This fund will be used to help RDS members and local users' groups to fight any closures which may be proposed under the 1962 Transport Act — if indeed any are proposed — which seems likely.

We shall publish how much money has accumulated in each issue of R.D.N. and if a line or station is subsequently proposed for closure applications will be considered for a grant from the fund. Donations to the fund from any source will be welcome and should be sent to the Society's National Treasurer, Mr. A.R. Macqueen, 20, Culgaith Gardens, Enfield, Middx. EN2 7PE.

ROWLAND VICTOR BANKS

It is with deep and profound regret that we have to report the death of the Society's President (of such short standing) on 31st May in his 78th year.

Mr. Banks joined the former Railway Invigoration Society in about 1960 as the result of an approach by one of our more eagle-eyed Committee Members after having had the temerity to write a letter in a local paper on the folly of rail closures. Before long he had joined the Committee and become its hard-working Press Officer, a post which he has held in effect ever since, and was in the forefront of the fight against the Beeching cuts — attending in the Mid Sixties more T.U.C.C. Enquiries on behalf of the Society than can be recalled.

In 1975, having been Vice-Chairman of RIS for some years, he took over as Chairman and was to be largely responsible for the negotiations which led to the formation of RDS in 1978, becoming its first Chairman on the merger of RIS & RDA. His activities, however, extended into many other fields — not least of which in the electrical industry (from which he retired in 1965) where he had been instrumental in forming a highly successful exhibition company and been Chairman of the local Branch of the Association of Supervising and Executive Engineers.

His main claim to fame, however, was (with Leo Abse MP.) as architect of the Divorce Law Reform Act 1969 (and until its final enactment — at the third attempt — as President of the Divorce Law Reform Union) a measure which was to have such a profound effect on the law of Matrimonial Causes in the early 1970s.

Above all he was a worker and has probably done more to advance the cause of the railways (and stem the tide of Beechingitis) than any other member of the Society. Many of us, however, will remember him as a good friend in times of trouble, not the least for the railways, and his comradeship and wise counsel will be sorely missed.

The Society was represented at the funeral in Bearsted on 4th June by 5 members of the National Committee together with Vice-President Dr. A.W.T. Daniel and Rev. Tom Comber who gave a short address.

Any member wishing to contribute to a worthy cause in his memory is invited to send a donation to the Electrical and Electronic Industries Benevolent Fund c/o 7, Manor Rise, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent.

JWB

A WAR THEY CANNOT WIN!

Before moving on to the main issue which concerns us at the present time it will be useful to review the long-running "Fares Fair" saga in London (as promised in the last issue). Here there seems to be stalemate for (as reported more extensively in PARLIAMENT) Douglas Jay's Bill appears to have been committed to the dustbin and ever since Transport Chairman, Dave Wetzell, was voted off a London bus for refusing to pay the new increased fare the Administration at County Hall to have gone to ground.

Cheap fares, subsidised from the rates do, however, appear to be legal — at least in Merseyside — since Woolf J. in *G.U.S. v M.C.C.* ruled that the Law Lords decision in *Bromley v G.L.C.* is not automatically binding elsewhere, as the 1968 Transport Act (which applies in the P.T.E. areas) adopts a wider criteria than the Transport (London) Act 1969, and the proposals in Merseyside could properly be approved even though they might result in a loss. Nevertheless the Government's policy of "divide and rule" seems to be succeeding as the Association of Metropolitan Authorities recently decided that it could not see its way to supporting amending legislation to sort out the "Great London Fares Muddle" as the Government might turn the tables and produce an Act which made its own Authorities' schemes illegal so it was best to let sleeping dogs lie.

The main issue on British Rail, however, is the deadlock over "productivity" and as the Unions' view is reported extensively elsewhere in this issue we shall concentrate on the position as it appears to us. Firstly we put it to Mr. Buckton and Weighell that they are fighting a war they cannot win, however meritorious their case may be. One reason for this view which springs immediately to mind is the conclusion of the Parliamentary Select Committee's Report on Railway Electrification (published on 12th May) with which our late President had been so closely associated and to which the Society submitted evidence.

For, whilst the Committee found that the Joint Review (on Electrification) had established a "prima facie" case for further main line electrification and urged the Government to give approval to at least one new scheme in the near future in order to provide continuity of work for the supplying industries, it qualified this by saying that the Railways Board and the Unions would need to provide positive evidence of their ability to reach agreement on significant productivity improvements before authorisation is given for subsequent schemes and the Committee's Chairman, Tom Bradley M.P., added "whilst the case for electrification does not depend on productivity improvements, there is in my mind, no doubt that the railway industry cannot expect further major capital expenditure unless it demonstrates that it can and will set its own house in order and ensure that full advantage is taken of investment already made to improve the railway infrastructure as a whole."

This means that agreement must be reached in the various outstanding manning disputes and both sides of the industry show themselves willing to face the future in a spirit of co-operation and compromise, and make a determined effort to avoid the kinds of conflict which did such harm to the goodwill of the industry's customers, and its business prospects during the winter. He therefore regretted that, despite Lord MacCarthy's recommendations, the sparring between ASLEF and the Board over "flexible rostering" was continuing.

The issue of "productivity" still therefore seems to be paramount and Sir Peter Parker in presenting his Annual Report for 1981 made quite clear that he was prepared to face more strikes rather than end the fight to modernise working practices — a view which he repeated to L. & H.C. Branch Committee Members attending a recent television presentation. Privatisation though appears to have hit a snag as BR's 45 Sealink Ships lost £4½ million in 1981 although its harbours made a profit of £5.1m. Hotels also lost £2.4m. and Hovercraft £1.4m. The Property Board on the other hand made a cash contribution to BR's coffers of £71.2m., Advertising sites £4.7m. whilst Freightliners showed a modest profit of £100,000.

Cash problems, however, meant that BR invested £90m. less than the £398m. ceiling set by the Government and whilst passengers paid an extra 7% at £1,023m. there were 5% fewer of them at 718m. With an increase in coal traffic Freight losses were more than halved at £25m. The number of jobs eliminated during 1981 was 12,700 cutting the total pay-roll to 227,252 and negotiations are now in hand with TSSA for up to 3,000 jobs to go at management level. Sir Peter saw 1981 as a good fighting year whose lustre should not be dimmed by the dispute with ASLEF as there had been an operating surplus of £38m., which only became a loss of £37m. after interest charges, and added "The ASLEF strikes have disrupted the progress of recent years but have not diverted us from our objectives — to modernise our services and give better value for money."

But time is now rapidly running out and further strikes will only give the Government the excuse it is looking for to turn the screw even harder and also make it very difficult for those of its supporters who wish to see an efficiently run nationalised railway industry prosper resist the ambitions of the hardliners in the Treasury; the influential

academics and railway conversion "nuts" (who carry such weight in high places) to ensure its eventual decline and extinction. In short the Government can "win" by simply doing nothing (as it has effectively done over the last 2 years). Changes in working practices are now becoming urgent because of the financial situation (not the least on BR itself) and whilst the fact that their members probably receive the lowest wages of railway workers in Europe gives the Unions some justification for digging their heels in it will profit them nothing if BR is forced to implement its now well-known plan to close Hastings - Tunbridge Wells; Hull - Scarborough; Settle - Carlisle; Oxford - Worcester; Aberystwyth - Portmadoc; Barrow - Whitehaven; Oldham - Rochdale and Middlesbrough - Whitby.

Furthermore the Government's delaying tactic of setting up an Inquiry under Sir David Serpell, to investigate the options for the railways over the next 20 years, will merely provide further time to set the scene for, and make inevitable, another Beeching type closure programme which is why RDS has already drawn up contingency plans. Nevertheless if the Unions are determined to plunge over the precipice like the "Gaderene Swine" they may find it difficult to achieve the "common cause" with rail users desired by Ray Buckton on 27th March (See below) and with the viability of a rolling programme of electrification sinking slowly out of sight as BR's financial prospects plummet the only possible deterrent to a change of policy regarding the "social railway" could be the need to comply with E.E.C. Regulations. Any suggestion therefore that a future Railways Act might radically alter the situation with regard to the "Public Service Obligation" is fatuous - *that is whilst Britain remains a member of the E.E.C.*

It could even be argued that the policy of cutting back the level of P.S.O. Grant (first instituted in 1975) is in itself in direct contravention of E.E.C. law, certainly whilst the network remains at its present size, so those retired Ministry Gurus and Tory Hard-liners who consider Sir David should consider whether we need a railway at all may well be heading for a precipice of their own. If the Government really intends to decimate Britain's railways we think it should cut the double talk and come clean and admit it and to the Unions we would say - "Remember what Jack Dash did for the run-down of the London Docks system - now virtually derelict!"

WITH THIS ISSUE

"IN PARLIAMENT" - "MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT" - "LOTTERY FORM"

RAIL DEVELOPMENT WEEK

Saturday 23rd October to Saturday 30th October 1982 has been designated as a week of action nationwide by RDS. The Society's Branches & Areas will be organising public meetings, filmshows, displays, exhibitions, leafleting, a "write-in" to politicians etc.,

In particular we hope that as many users' groups as possible will participate. Two have already indicated plans to hold public meetings in the week. If you have any ideas for the week, and if your Group would like to participate please write to Mr. T.J. Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ (Tel: 81721).

A planning meeting for the week was held on 4th June when it was agreed to produce a poster and special leaflets to publicise the various events. A FULL PROGRAMME OF WHICH WILL BE PUBLISHED IN THE NEXT ISSUE.

RAIL USERS & UNIONS - NEED FOR COMMON CAUSE.

That was the plea of ASLEF General Secretary, Ray Buckton, when addressing the Fourth National Conference of Rail Users' Groups at Friends' House, Euston on 27th March.

70 delegates representing nearly 40 Groups (from as far afield as Central Wales, Weymouth, North Devon, Ormskirk and North Yorkshire together with a substantial number from London and the South East) heard one of the railway industry's more controversial figures give a Trade Union View of the Railways' Future. "This," he said, "was an optimistic title for there was no certainty that railways had any future in this country - that is if there was not significant change in government policy."

Cars were becoming too expensive and too environmentally destructive to satisfy the demand for mass mobility and even now less than half all British households had access to private road transport, and large numbers of people - the young, the old and the poor would always depend on public transport - which meant in part rail transport - for mobility. Rail travel was inherently more economic than other forms - if like were compared with like - and the more passengers and goods it carried the cheaper it became.

No-one should be deceived by the Government's excuses that there was no money to pay for a decent rail system. There was certainly enough for new road building for almost as it played down the joint BRB/DTp. report on electrification the Government announced that it would provide £190 million for the M40 extension from Birmingham to Oxford - and this on a project where the Department of Transport was not even sure whether there would be enough traffic to make it worthwhile under its own lax criteria.

Every country but Britain (except perhaps the USA) was building up its rail system and the French TGV had attracted much favourable comment, in comparison with our own APT, but one could not reap the fruits of high technology without planting the seeds first. These were steady, adequate investment, high workforce morale, consistent government direction and a degree of public interest and commitment - all of which (except maybe the last) were conspicuously absent in Britain. It was therefore difficult to talk without emotion of the criminal act of vandalism which was now being perpetrated on British Rail.

"Railways cannot be turned on and off", he said "to suit the latest fads of the Treasury". Rail investment moved slowly and today's rail expenditure was the rail system of ten or fifteen years hence. But this also worked in reverse and it was fatally easy for governments to avoid even the most essential renewal and maintenance. When the consequences would not become fully apparent until after the next election, confronted by a choice between tax cuts and essential investment it was easier to choose the former and let someone else pick up the pieces.

Public control of industries in Britain was a very political issue which was perhaps why successive governments had never fully come to terms with a nationalised rail industry. Even Labour governments had always adopted an apologetic, even half-hearted attitude to something they had created and never really worked out just what they wanted from it. Furthermore the rail industry had always borne the brunt of any public expenditure cuts and if belts had to be tightened BR was always asked to tighten them first. Then there was the general feeling that the transport of the future would be road transport and that railways had more or less had their day. That is until the 1974 oil crisis destroyed any credibility such a wild idea had, but one which still lingers tenaciously in the places where it can do most damage i.e. in the House of Commons and the Department of Transport.

Obviously in the future there would need to be a road system but the massive 6 lane motorways of the sixties could become the transport dinosaurs of the future and clearly had no place in the low-cost, low-energy consuming system which it would demand. There was a bright future for rail/travel but not unless there was some quick decisive action. It was common knowledge that BR was receiving from the Government roughly £150m. a year less than it needed to maintain services at present levels. The Government was looking for any reason not to electrify or for that matter to invest in the system at all for when maintenance and repair costs were rising BR's investment ceiling had been cut by approx 8%. One view might be that the Government had simply decided that it could do without a rail system — if that were true then the outlook for the railways was indeed very bleak.

Mr Buckton concluded by referring to the peculiar attitude of the British to their railway system for there was very little organised effective resistance to rail closures and still less to service cuts. For example when BR was forced to cut its commuter services around London by nearly 15% last year there was very little organised protest, if any. Rail users in fact were not a natural pressure group and people's ideas about transport — and particularly rail transport — tended to be contradictory. Most organisations had their vices and to vice of the rail user was perhaps his all too frequent hostility to the people who ran the system. This was something of which the Government were well aware and which it usually did its best to encourage.

As to the issue of productivity it was very easy for a government to provoke and orchestrate trouble to conceal its own responsibility for the evil effects of lack of investment. If it didn't want to pay for electrification it wouldn't look very good to say so, so why not impose conditions which it knew would be completely unacceptable to the hard-pressed workforce and then blame it all on them. Referring to the work being done by RDS and the rail users groups Mr Buckton felt that the future of the rail system depended upon the rail unions and the rail users finding common cause with one another to fight against British Rail's "death by a thousand cuts" and referred to what had been done elsewhere.

10 years ago an alliance of commuters and unions forced a radical shift in transport policy in the Paris area. As a result it now has one of the cheapest and most up-to-date systems in the world and that was achieved under a government on the conservative side of the political spectrum. This tradition of protest was somewhat alien to the average British Rail user but the threat to the railway system demanded a relaxation of this British reticence. Rail users should not only develop their own forms of action and protest but educate their fellows to do the same otherwise in 10 years time when there was no railway system left to speak of they would only have themselves to blame.

Mr Buckton's address was followed by a lengthy Question & Answer session for delegates from which it was learnt (*inter alia*) that:-

there was no such thing as continental rostering — different administrations tailoring their methods to their own special needs; flexible rostering was in fact only one of 6 items, out of 19, on productivity where BR had tried to impose a solution on rail drivers; that the problem of the Bedford — St.Pancras electric units arose from issues of railway safety and not from a dispute between ASLEF and NUR; that BR's attempts to sell itself to the public would only succeed if it had a "nice apple to sell" and finally (and more disturbing) that as many as 10% of drivers had had to give up work because of the stress and strain of trying to keep trains running on a deteriorating system.

Selected extracts from parliamentary questions and speeches. Commons replies given by Transport Secretary, David Howell, or his Parliamentary Secretary, Reginald Eyre unless otherwise shown.

C = Conservative, Lab. = Labour, Lib. = Liberal.

An asterisk denotes the reply was given orally.

Freight traffic falling — need for more private sidings.

MARCH 10 : *John Heddle* (C. Lichfield & Tamworth): What proportion of freight traffic is carried by rail now compared with the last five years?

Mr. Eyre: For 1980 about 14% in terms of tonne-miles. The five years from 1975-80 vary between 14.3 and 15.8%.

Mr. Heddle: Do you agree that the scope for translating freight back to rail is enormous, but not until the unions streamline their working practices and guarantee that goods will be delivered on time?

Mr. Eyre: You are right to say the scope is large and to emphasise the vital importance of productivity.

Roger Stott (Lab. Westhoughton): Investment is also of crucial importance. The Armitage report recommended an increase in Sec. 8 grants to provide private rail sidings. Are you aware that one of the impediments in achieving that is the peculiar and inhibiting planning conditions that apply to these grants? Will you look at this with a view to introducing legislation aimed at making those conditions more amenable?

Mr. Eyre: We understand the importance of that aspect and we shall consider the points that you have raised.

Eric Cockeram (C. Ludlow): Does not your reply point to the declining importance of the railways? Does not that demonstrate the importance of greater roads expenditure?

Mr. Eyre: Unfortunately you are right. Figures show a slight decline in freight carried by rail. It emphasises the tremendous importance of railways achieving a competitive position.

Ken Eastham (Lab. Manchester Blackley): You seem to be enthusiastic about the transfer of heavy freight to the roads. Are you prepared to offset the collapses of roads and sewers in many of our cities?

Mr. Eyre: You have entirely misunderstood. There is scope for railways to attract more freight. The Government wants them to, but it must be done on the basis of a competitive attraction.

Electrification — East Coast Main Line Top Priority.

* *Gordon Bagier* (Lab. Sunderland South): asked for a statement on main line electrification.

Mr. Howell: The board will first need to reassess the financial prospects of inter-city and freight business in the light of the ASLEF strikes.

Mr. Bagier: Will you use the recent dispute as an excuse for delay? When will east coast main line electrification start?

Mr. Howell: We are looking for progress on the railways, not excuses. East coast main line is one of the projects that will be at the top of the list when electrification proposals come forward. The recent strikes mean that traffic forecasts will have to be revised.

Colin Shepherd (C. Hereford): Will you bear in mind that English companies operating in the valuable overseas market of railway electrification find it difficult to compete without an adequate home base?

Mr. Howell: I am concerned to see that suppliers have a good home base and make progress overseas. However, electrification investment, which is large, must stand or fall on its viability in the UK context.

Robert Hughes (Lab. Aberdeen North): You cannot be allowed to get away with that. You have had BR's electrification proposals for more than two years, when massive productivity gains have been provided by the unions. The industry is fed up with the Government using every excuse to prevent investment in BR. You must show some commitment.

Mr. Howell: You are misrepresenting the situation. Perhaps you will explain to members of ASLEF that they are putting a veto on productivity increases and therefore on a good, well-invested future for railways. Productivity is the key to progress.

David Ennals (Lab. Norwich North): Will you again take up the question of electrification with the Chairman of BR? There has been an intolerable delay with electrification under both you and your predecessor. When do you expect to give a timetable for electrification of Colchester to Norwich, which is at the head of BR's list?

Mr. Howell: The board is bound to look again at traffic forecasts, previously based on assumptions now in question as a result of the pointless, senseless and self-destructive strike of ASLEF. That is bound to mean some delay.

Albert Booth (Lab. Barrow-in-Furness): Why are you grossly misrepresenting the position, when you know that your predecessor took a decision against picking up any of the five main line electrification options before there was any question of a dispute?

Mr. Howell: My predecessor and the Government made clear their commitment in principle to a 10-year rolling programme on proper conditions, such as that inter-city and freight should be run commercially. Unfortunately, the ASLEF strike has produced the need for new traffic forecasts. If you feel so strongly on the matter, perhaps more speed in condemning the ASLEF strike would have been in place before damage was done.

Roger Moate (C. Faversham): Many Conservative MPs regard the electrification programme as essential for a modern railway, but it depends on modern attitudes from all the unions involved. Do you agree that more damage has been done to the investment prospects of BR by the ASLEF dispute than any other factor in recent years?

Mr. Howell: Yes.

Chunnel — Minister agrees need for decision.

* *Nicholas Winterton* (C. Macclesfield) and *Philip Whitehead* (Lab. Derby North): asked for an announcement of policy towards the Channel Tunnel.

Mr. Howell: I expect to receive the report of the Anglo-French study group in the course of the next few weeks. I shall then wish to discuss it with my French counterpart, but I do not expect a decision to be long delayed.

Mr. Winterton: How will the additional funds be provided for BR if, as the Government have implied, they would like a 7-metre rather than a 6-metre tunnel?

Mr. Howell: If a scheme involves extra expenditure by BR, that would have to be taken into consideration when fixing its investment ceilings.

Mr. Whitehead: Are you aware of the old saying "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick"? Is there not a need for a speedy decision on this major project?

Mr. Howell: The Anglo-French studies have gone ahead quickly. Once the French became involved in the studies, they moved quickly.

Michael Marshall (C. Arundel): What is your understanding of the involvement of private French capital?

Mr. Howell: On this side eight groups have put forward schemes as promoters for the fixed Channel link. On the French side there is greater inclination to look at market sources of finance than at purely State resources, as was originally suggested.

All the above questions were asked and answered on MARCH 10. Mrs. Thatcher had been expected to discuss the Channel link at her meeting with President Mitterand in May, but no statement was eventually made on this subject — only on the Falklands crisis.

MAY 12 ** *Teddy Taylor, Robert Adley* (C. Christchurch & Lymington) and others asked more questions on the Channel Tunnel.

Sir Albert Costain (C. Folkestone & Hythe): Had the previous scheme not been cancelled the tunnel would have been open next year. Are you aware that Folkestone has had to put up with indecision for 15 years?

Mr. Howell: I recognise the need not to repeat the long delays and uncertainties of past years. I recognise the need for a decision and shall try to meet it.

** At the time of writing *Teddy Taylor* (C. Southend East) was due to ask the Transport Secretary for a statement on the tunnel on June 16. I have been unable to enquire of him the purpose of the question, but he told me earlier he is not a great supporter of the project.

J.E.

Lorries — Case for controls + weight increases.

MARCH 10 * *Gary Waller* (C. Brighouse & Spenborough) and *Sydney Chapman* (C. Chipping Barnet) asked for a statement on implementing the proposals in his White Paper on "Lorries, People and the Environment."

Mr. Howell: Consultations with local authority associations have included discussions on their more effective use of powers to control lorries and their routing. I am also consulting local authorities about the establishment of lorry action areas for the places worst affected by lorry traffic.

Mr. Waller: Will you confirm that changes in rates of duty payable on heavy lorries will ensure that these vehicles pay their track costs? That is one of the main recommendations of the Armitage Report.

Mr. Howell: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has proposed that vehicle excise duty on the heavier lorries should be substantially increased — by, I believe, about a quarter.

David Crouch (C. Canterbury): Which will come first — heavier lorries, safety requirements, bypasses, motorways, route control . . . ?

Mr. Howell: The package of controls that I believe is necessary to prevent a bad situation getting worse must go hand in hand with any changes in maximum weights. At the same time a substantial bypass programme has been speeded up.

Gordon Bagler (Lab, Sunderland South): Whatever the Chancellor is doing about meeting the track costs, that in no way comes near to putting the environment costs right. Do you agree that the vast number of people are absolutely against an increase in lorry weights? Will you give an assurance that you have no intention of agreeing to those weights coming into operation?

Mr. Howell: There is a strong case for a comprehensive package of controls. That ought to go hand in hand with allowing a heavier maximum weight, to allow the industry to compete and find the extra cost of these controls. That is a sensible and balanced approach.

MP WANTS BRANCH LINES PRIVATISED

MARCH 16 * *John Farr* (C, Harborough): sought leave, under the 10 minute rule, to bring a private member's bill to provide for the sale of the ancillary assets of BR. This was defeated.

Mr. Farr said his Bill required BR to get out of property, catering, hotels and shipping businesses and to concentrate on the single purpose of an efficiently run network. "I am aware that the 1962, 1968 and 1981 Transport Acts enable the Board to exercise its powers of disposal. Since the 1981 Act the economic position of the railways has dramatically worsened. My proposals require the disposal of BR's 26 hotels, 30 SEA-LINK ships and 13 railway workshops.

I now turn to what I believe to be a new lease of life for the branch lines. BR operates about 20,000 miles of track and is threatening to close 3,000 miles of it unless the Government inject more than £700 million. Every mile of permanent way left after Beeching is a national asset. The Bill would set up a holding company to take over one-third, or 7,000 miles, of track at once, with the duty to dispose of those lines to local consortia of business men, industrialists and hotel and tourist interests. With local knowledge, business acumen and enthusiasm, I believe they would gain a new lease of life. That system has been tried successfully abroad, notably in Switzerland, where State-owned and independent operators work in harmony.

Making the traditional speech for the opposing side:-

Peter Snape (Lab, West Bromwich East): said the fascinating idea Mr. Farr had put forward was that for the private management of rural services. *But who would buy them?* Among the famous 40 branch lines often cited by Government supporters as ripe for closure, the cost-to-earnings ratio was 2% to 1. There was not a shred of evidence that councils would be willing to spend more — or indeed anything — on local rail services. If the Bill were accepted there would be no future for stations such as Melton Mowbray, Narborough or Oakham, in Mr Farr's own county. He cited the precedent of Switzerland. He has a point, as the Swiss are extremely good at subsidising their railway services.

Their financial contribution to the running of the federal railways is four times greater than that of any Government in this country in the last 20 years. That is perhaps the only precedent that the Government would be wise to follow. Sheer financial necessity is only one barrel of the shotgun that the Government is holding to BR's head. The board is already under notice to sell off its hotel and shipping interests. The Bill is nonsense.

Leave to bring in the Bill was refused by 166 votes to 152 a majority of 14.

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

JULY 1982

MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT — ISSUE NO. 15

OFFICERS & NATIONAL COMMITTEE — 1982/83

At the Annual General Meeting held in Reading on 24th April the following additional Vice-Presidents were elected:-

Lord Jenkins of Putney, (a former Labour Minister of the Arts and rail advocate)
Stanley F. Steward, (Chairman of the S.W.E.B. and very much in favour of railway electrification).

Richard Cottrell, (a member of the European Parliament with very pro-rail views)

(Mr R. V. Banks was elected the Society's First President but his untimely death is reported fully elsewhere in this issue)

Full details of the principal officers of the Society and members of the National Committee together with the other officers and members of Committees and Sub-Committees (appointed at the first meeting of the Committee held in Cambridge on 8th May) are contained in the enclosed yearly SUPPLEMENT to the MEMBERS' HANDBOOK. Also contained therein is an up to date list of Branch & Area Representatives.

Please note the new representatives for SOUTH WALES & NORTHANTS.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING — 1982 — RESOLUTIONS

The following Resolutions were passed at the meeting held in Reading and will be sent to the appropriate Government Ministers, Opposition Spokesman, Chairman of B.R. and other interested parties:-

- (1) This Society believes that construction of a Channel Tunnel, and the improvement of rail links to it, should commence as soon as possible, and that development of a Third London Airport should be postponed until the effect on demand for air travel between the U.K. and the rest of Europe of an adequate high speed rail link with frequent services has been ascertained.
Notwithstanding it considers that land earmarked for such an airport, and the rail links to it, should be safeguarded from other developments until the results of such a review are known.
- (2) This Society considers that bus and train operators should make greater effort to co-ordinate their services and publicise connections into each others services; in particular it urges that greater publicity should be given to the possibility of bus/train interchange at airport railway stations (such as at Gatwick).
- (3) The Railway Development Society asserts its intention to press for subsidised public transport operating with attractive fare levels wherever it is socially necessary.
- (4) The Railway Development Society urge British Rail to institute a cheap fare facility for people who do not qualify for one of the various railcards, and suggests that serious consideration be given to an "Investor's Railcard."

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT TO THE A.G.M. — 24th APRIL 1982

With the general recession and the tightening of purse strings 1981 was a difficult year for many organisations and our membership did not therefore increase as much as we had hoped. However, in many ways it has been a year of progress for R.D.S.

Our A.G.M. in Sheffield, on 25th April, was very well attended in spite of the sudden unexpected spell of arctic weather with heavy snowfalls in this northern city.

The National Committee met 6 times during the year, four times in London and one each in Birmingham and Cambridge. We also continued the policy of passing to our specialist Sub-Committees much detailed work so that the National Committee could concentrate on important national policy issues. To these was added, after the 1981 A.G.M., one concerned principally with a campaign for re-opening disused lines and stations as part of the Society's aim of railway development.

We succeeded this year in producing quarterly issues of the Journal "Railway Development News" as against the 3 issues only in 1980 and the Editorial Board has continued to strive for improvements in its content and presentation, including for the first time in the last issue paid advertisements.

Two new Branches were formed in 1981, one for the area of North Hertfordshire and the other for Severnside. Whilst new Area Representatives were appointed for North-umbria & Durham; North Wales and Cheshire the untimely death of Chris Shiel, of Totnes, was a great loss and Devon & Cornwall remains (as yet) unrepresented. We expect however to have the whole country covered by either Branches or Area Representatives by this year's A.G.M. At national level liaison continues with the National Council on Inland Transport and with Transport 2000 at both national and local levels.

Once again we have held very successful Conferences for local Rail Users' Groups; one national one in London in the Spring and two Regional Conferences; in Sleaford and Birmingham, in the Autumn. Similar Conferences or other events are planned for 1982.

An important milestone for railway development was the passing of Tony Speller M.P.'s Bill to ease the problems of re-opening freight-only lines to passenger services, on an experimental basis, and implementation of the powers of this Act is the main function of the new sub-committee referred to above.

As I have said, 1981 was a difficult year financially which limited our activities. Nevertheless our status and influence as a responsible railway development pressure group has continued to grow and with improved finances 1982 should be a year of even greater achievements for R.D.S.

R.V.Banks

(Copies of the full Reports submitted to the Annual General Meeting — for those members unable to attend — can be obtained from the Editor by enclosing a stamped addressed envelope not less than 7" x 10" to 108, Berwick Road, London E16 3DS).

A YEAR OF MEMBERSHIP PROMOTION — 1981

Out of the 182 people to whom I sent details of the Society, 31 became members, a percentage of 17%. This was less favourable than the previous year when a figure of 26% was achieved.

Whilst it cannot be ruled out that the general recession has been partly responsible there are other factors to be taken into consideration. One of these is the fact that the Society's advertisements in "Railway Magazine" and "Modern Railways" have lately been promoting sales of literature rather than inviting membership alone so replies seeking lists of publications have tended to prevail. These have numbered only 50 this year as against 88 in 1980. Out of these we enrolled 12 new members (24%) whereas last year the figure was 40 (45%).

MEMBERS' HANDBOOK — SUPPLEMENT No. 2

(Replaces Pages 1 — 6)

(A) National Committee for the year 1982-83

CHAIRMAN:	Dr. M.P.L.Caton, 10, Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex. (Tel: Upminster 25991 W. 01-592 3060 x 3192)
VICE-CHAIRMAN:	S.F.Wilkinson, 52, Manor Park, Histon, Cambridge (Tel: 022 023 3981 W. 0480 62263)
GENERAL SECRETARY:	R.J.P.Townend, St.Julians, Sevenoaks, Kent. (Tel: 0732 458261)
HON. TREASURER:	A.R.Macqueen, 20, Culgaith Gardens, Enfield, Middx. EN2 7PE. (Tel: 01-363 2874)
Other Members:	
W.J.H.Apsey,	89 Torbay Road, London N.W.6. (Tel: 01-328 1268 W. 606 4040 x 2751)
E.R.Barbery,	"Poplar View", Foxmoor Lane, Ebley, Stroud, Glos. GL5 4QQ (Tel: 045 382 2147)
J.W.Barfield,	108, Berwick Road, London E16 3DS (Tel: 01-474 5722 W. 01-980 4414 x 317)
A.Bevan	12, Morris Field Croft, Hall Green, Birmingham, B28 0RN (Tel: 021 745 6001 W. 021-235 3903/9944)
L.J.Boylett,	15, Athenaeum Road, Whetstone, London N20 9AA (Tel: 01-446 0537)
D.J.Bradbury,	59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield, S.17
G.L.Collett,	62, Glanville Road, Bromley, Kent, BR2 9LW (Tel: 01-460 1722 W. 01-213 6842)
W.L.Freitag,	22, Cravells Road, Harpenden, Herts. (Tel: 63098)
T.J.Garrodd,	15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ (Tel: 0502 81721 W. 0603 28181 x 44)
Miss H.Lingard,	9, Beckham Lane, Winchester Road, Petersfield, Hants, GU32 3BU (Wessex Branch Representative)
R.Macqueen,	20, Culgaith Gardens, Enfield, Middx. EN2 7PE (Tel: 01-363 2874)
D.F.Ogilvy,	"Trees", 116, Bucknalls Lane, Garston, Watford, Herts. (Tel: 09273 72143)
H.G.M.Rogers,	64, Cowper Road, London W7 1EJ (Tel: 01-567 5761)

C.F.Rowe, "Hollydene", 148, Worlds End Lane, Chelsfield,
Kent, BR6 6AS
(Tel: 0689 52535)

Dr.F.G.Tomlins, 1, The Ridgeway, Chingford, London E4 6QN

P.Wakefield, 43, High Street, Oakington, Cambridge, CB4 5AG
(Tel: 022 023 3230)

Other Officers: * Not on National Committee.

Hon. Auditor: R.C.Craigen, 3, Leys Road, Cambridge.

Membership Secretary: H.G.M.Rogers, (address above)

Membership Promotion Officer: L.J.Boylett, (address above)

* *Sales Officer:* A.F.Johnson, 38, Grange Park, Ealing, W5.

- (B) *Committees:* (Correspondence should normally be addressed to the first named member - whose address is given if not on the National Committee.)
- (i) *Finance & General Purposes:* M.P.L.Caton, S.F.Wilkinson, R.J.P.Townend, A.R.Macqueen, D.J.Bradbury.
- (ii) *Branches & Areas:* M.J.Farahar (Sec.) (35, Ashmere Grove, Ipswich, IP4 2RE Tel: 0473 217630) W.J.H.Apsay (Scotland, Lancs. & Merseyside), J.W.Barfield (Severnside, Thames Valley, Wessex, Devon & Cornwall), W.L.Freitag (L & H.C., G.N.O.S., & Northants), T.J.Garrod, (East Anglia, South Lincs., N.Lincs/S.Humberside, Yorkshire, Teesside, Northumberland & Durham)
- T.o.R. (To advise Branches & Areas, co-ordinate and assist them where necessary, and to improve and expand the Society's organisation throughout the country. N.B. correspondence concerning areas other than those indicated as allocated to specific members should be addressed to the Secretary)
- (iii) *Publicity & Publications:* R.F.White & D.F.Ogilvy.
(FURTHER VOLUNTEERS TO THIS COMMITTEE WILL BE WELCOME) *
- T.o.R. (To act as a review body, checking all publications issued by the Society, to advise on the printing and pricing of leaflets etc., and to act as a vehicle for marketing and fund raising)
- (iv) *International/Channel Tunnel:* Dr. F.G.Tomlins, J.W.Barfield, K.Meyer, R.Macqueen & Dr. A.W.T.Daniel.
- T.o.R. (To establish and maintain contact between RDS and similar organisations abroad; to consider joint action - where appropriate - to study aspects of foreign railways which may have relevance to the situation in Gt.Britain and to conduct the Society's campaign for a rail based Channel Tunnel)
- (C) *Sub-Committees:*
- (i) *Freight:* S.F.Wilkinson, E.R.Barbery, K.O.Cutmore, P.Wakefield, Miss H. Lingard (FURTHER VOLUNTEERS ALSO WELCOME) *
- T.o.R. (To study rail freight problems, and take appropriate action in consultation with the National Committee)
- (ii) *Rail & Road:* T.J.Garrod, S.F.Wilkinson, B.J.Eyre, A.Oldfield *

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY



INVITE YOU TO JOIN ITS MONTHLY LOTTERY - with a chance to win cash prizes and at the same time to assist the society's cause. Half of the proceeds will go into the GENERAL FUNDS of RDS while the other half will be distributed each month in the form of 10 CASH PRIZES so the more members who participate the larger will be the pool of prize money.

FIRST PRIZE - 40% of the pool THIRD PRIZE - 10% of the pool
SECOND PRIZE - 20% of the pool FOURTH PRIZE - 6% of the pool

There will then be 2 prizes of 5% each; 2 of 4% each and 2 final prizes of 3% each. With 500 members (at £1.00 per head) this would provide £250 per month which could be allocated to prize money with:

FIRST PRIZE £100 SECOND PRIZE £50 THIRD PRIZE £25 etc.

Chances can only be bought by crediting the RDS Account at Barclays Bank PLC 125, Bramley Road, Southgate, N14 4UZ by the 6th day of each month. Those whose "ticket" money appears on the account that day will then be able to participate in the draw on the following 16th of the month. If the 16th falls on a weekend or a bank holiday the draw will take place on the next working day.

No tickets will be issued in order to keep the administration costs to a minimum, but the chances will be recorded at 25p each to comply with the Lotteries Act. To save costs we suggest a minimum of £1.00 a head - hence the format of the BANKERS ORDER below.

To participate, just complete the attached form and send it to me. This will be sent on to your bank. Leave the "Ref. No." space blank.

The draw will take place each month at 20, Culgaith Gardens, Enfield, Middx. at noon on 16th (subject to the proviso above).

N.B. ONLY RDS MEMBERS MAY PARTICIPATE

A. R. Macqueen

Promoter

To: A.R. Macqueen, 20, Culgaith Gardens, Enfield, Middx. EN2 7PE

Please include me in the purchase of 4 tickets at 25p for each £1.00 subscribed, on my behalf, monthly until further notice.

NAME SIGNED

ADDRESS

.....

BANKERS ORDER

To Bank PLC Sort Code

Address

Pay Barclays Bank PLC (Oakwood Branch) 125, Bramley Road, Southgate, N14 4UZ.

For the credit of the RDS current account no. 20727792, No. 2 (Promotion).

Quoting Ref. No. the sum of £ (This must be a whole number of pounds) on 2nd of the month, and monthly thereafter until further notice.

A/c No.

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Signed

- (iii) *Editorial Board:* (Railway Development News): J.W.Barfield, A.Bevan, G.L.Collett, W.J.H.Apsey, J.Ellis & K. Willson.
- (iv) *Re-Openings:* T.J.Garrod, F.G.Tomlins, M.G.Crowhurst, D.F.Ogilvy, W.J.H. Apsey, F.K.Davies & J.W.Page (Convenor) (8, Glebe Way, Histon, Cambs.)
- T.o.R. (To advise existing re-openings campaigns and to co-ordinate these at national level. Its task is not to initiate local re-opening campaigns, but it will co-operate with anybody who starts a campaign for which local support is evident)
- * Write to the General Secretary.

2. BRANCHES & AREAS:

(a) Branches:

London & Home Counties: (Greater London, Essex - (as far north as, and including Dunmow, Braintree and Kelvedon), Surrey, Kent, East Sussex, West Sussex, Hertfordshire (as far north as and including Hertford, Welwyn Garden City and Luton), Buckinghamshire (as far as and including Buckingham, Aylesbury and High Wycombe), Berkshire (east of Reading), Hampshire (towns of Aldershot, Bentley and Alton)

Branch Secretary: A.J.Kearns, 11b, Aspinall Road, Brockley, SE4 2EH
(Tel: 01-732 3232)

Midlands: (West Midlands, Hereford & Worcester, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Warwickshire)

Branch Secretary: A.Bevan, 12, Morris Field Croft, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0RN. (Tel: 021 745 6001)

East Anglia: (Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire*, Essex (north of and including Stansted, Marks Tey and Clacton) *except where covered by G.N.O.S. (See below)

Branch Secretary: T.J.Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ. (Tel: 0502 81721)

Yorkshire: (West, North & South Yorkshire, N.Humberside)

Branch Secretary: D.J.Bradbury, 59, Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield S.17

Great Northern Outer Suburban: (Area north of Hertford and Welwyn Garden City as far as Royston and St. Neots)

Branch Secretary: M.J.Hadley, 39, Holmdale, Letchworth, Herts. SG6 1QQ
(Tel: 72669)

Severnside: (Avon, Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire - north of the Waterloo - Exeter Line)

Branch Secretary: E.R.Barbery, "Poplar View", Foxmoor Lane, Ebley, Stroud, Glos. GL5 4QQ (Tel: 045 382 2147)

Wessex: (Dorset - (as far north as including Yeovil and Gillingham), Wiltshire - (as far north as and including Tisbury and Salisbury), Hampshire - (except the area around the Alton Line), Isle of Wight.

Branch Secretary: Miss Hazel Lingard, 9, Beckham Lane, Winchester Road, Petersfield, Hants. GU32 3BU

(b)

Areas:

Northumberland & Durham: (Northumberland, Tyne & Wear, County Durham - except for Darlington * See below)

Area Representative: A. Macaulay, 27, Hewson Place, Sheriff Hill, Gateshead NE9 6QS

Tees-side: (Cleveland and the area of Co. Durham around Darlington)

Area Representative: S.J. Benyon, 610, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland.

Lancashire: (including Cumbria for the time being)

Area Representative: R.N. Watts, 15, Stanley Avenue, Lower Penwortham, Preston, Lancs. (Tel: 743371)

Merseyside:

Area Representative: R. Wilson, 9, Dutton Drive, Bebington, Wirral, Merseyside, L63 9AE (Tel: 051-334 8739)

North Wales: (Counties of Gwynedd & Clwyd)

Area Representative: M. Davies, Llys Menai, Menai Avenue, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2HH

Cheshire: (including the southern part of Greater Manchester)

Area Representative: J. Asquith, 24, Links Road, Romiley, Stockport, Cheshire.

East Midlands: (Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire & Leicestershire)

Area Representative: S.J. Hartopp, 72, Empress Road, Derby, DE3 6TE (Tel: 0332 47651)

North Lincolnshire & South Humberside: (Lincs., north of and including Lincoln and Firsby + Newark, Retford and South Humberside)

Area Representative: M.J. Savage, 5, Neville Street, Cleethorpes, South Humberside, DN35 7PZ (Tel: 0472 698938)

South Lincolnshire: (Lincolnshire - south of and including Skegness and Metheringham)

Area Representative: P.B. Jowett, 8, Deepdale Drive, Leasingham, Sleaford, Lincs.

Northamptonshire:

Area Representative: B.D.S. Chaplin, 2, Park Cottages, Harringworth Road, Gretton, Corby, Northants. (Tel: Rockingham 770416)

Thames Valley: (Oxfordshire, Buckinghamshire - west of Buckingham, Aylesbury & High Wycombe and Berkshire (Reading and west thereof))

Area Representative: Rev. T.G. Comber, 32, Alexandra Road, Oxford OX2 0DB (Tel: 0865 44632)

South Wales: (Gwent, Mid, South & West Glamorgan, Powys & Dyfed)

Area Representative: R. Mackay, 58, Malford Grove, Gilwern, Abergavenny, Gwent NP7 0RN. (Tel: 0873 831599)

Of great encouragement has been the increase in the number of recommendations made by members themselves; numbering 48 this year, of whom 5 have joined, 10.4% (23 in 1980 of whom 2 joined - 8.5%).

Details of the Society, together with invitations to join have been sent to 65 writers of letters printed in local and National newspapers and these have netted 9 new members (13.8%) which is an improvement on the previous year when 70 were approached but only 6 joined (8.5%).

Five persons applied for details via our (BM/RDS) address but with no source given, one of whom joined. Others wrote for details having seen one or other of our publications, from whom 3 new members were obtained. I sent details to five other people whom I happened to meet at various times but only one subsequently joined.

I would, however, like to thank those members who have recommended prospective members and to those who have sent Press Cuttings containing pro-rail letters and ask them to please carry on with the good work as it is only by this continual plodding away that we can hope to increase our membership.

I would nevertheless recommend that a more aggressive advertising campaign - exhorting people to become members - be undertaken and that EVERY publication produced by the Society contain an application form, together with an invitation to join.

Let us therefore all work together to make 1982 a much more successful year - the one in which we enrol our THOUSANTH MEMBER.

L. J. Boylett,

Membership Promotion Officer, 15, Athenaeum Road, Whetstone, N20 9AA

A DOUBLE BONUS FOR MEMBERS

We are pleased to announce two new benefits that are available exclusively to *current members* of RDS. Firstly the *TRAVELCARD*, briefly forecast in the previous issue of R.D.N. is available NOW! Although costing only £5.00 the card will provide excellent bargaining power at hotels, car hire companies, many stores and for a wider variety of services. The Publicity & Publications Committee has made many moves to create an awareness of this new facility but its total success must depend upon *YOU THE MEMBERS*.

Wherever you go anywhere you should present your *TRAVELCARD* and try and negotiate a discount at the early stages of any transaction; this applies especially at hotels, where the 'deal' should be established when you are booking in.

The sooner you obtain your *TRAVELCARD* the sooner you will be able to reap the benefits; so send off your £5.00 TODAY to Mr. H.G.M. Rogers, 64, Cowper Road, London W7 1EJ. The Society will be maintaining a record of places where especially good discounts are offered, so when you strike a bargain, please let us know. Just send the name and address of the hotel or supplier (and details of the discount obtained) to DAVID OGILVY, "Trees", 116, Bucknalls Lane, Garston, Watford, Herts. - but first APPLY NOW to Mr. Rogers for your special R.D.S. *TRAVELCARD*.

The second RDS innovation is a LOTTERY. This gives you an opportunity to win a worthwhile sum when each draw is held and at the same time provides a regular - and much needed - income for the Society.

FULL DETAILS AND APPLICATION FORM ARE ENCLOSED WITH THIS ISSUE OF RDN and the first draw will take place in SEPTEMBER 1982 or as soon as we have a MINIMUM OF 30 SUBSCRIBERS.

Remember that RDS is YOUR SOCIETY. Many members of Committees and others work away behind the scenes to promote the railway cause, but the overall success and effectiveness of the organisation must be determined largely by the membership. So support both those new schemes and help to ensure the long-term financial health of RDS.

ACTION NOW, PLEASE!

DFO

P.S. **DO YOU RUN YOUR OWN BUSINESS** — If you run (or have any influence in) any form of business, may we hope that you will grant worthwhile discounts to RDS members who have TRAVELCARDS? If so please send details to David Ogilvy (at the above address).

HELP — The RDS Rail & Road Sub-Committee published a useful digest of press cuttings, for use against the road lobby, in January; and this is still available from the Sales Officer (Mr. A.F. Johnson), 38, Grange Park, Ealing, London W5. The Sub-Committee is continuing to collect cuttings — on matters like road accidents, direct and indirect costs of roads, overloading of lorries, problems of law-enforcement etc., It hopes to up-date the digest at regular intervals so please send any useful cuttings (marked with the name and date of the paper) to Mr. B.J. Eyre, 127, Bullard Road, Woodcock Road, Norwich, NR3 3RA.

HAVE YOU MOVED — HAVE YOU RENEWED? — If you have moved recently and have not received "RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT NEWS" it is possibly because we are not psychic. Please therefore drop a line to the Membership Secretary, Mr. H.G.M. Rogers (not any other member of the Committee) at 64, Cowper Road, London W7 1EJ — (as for your Travelcard).

On reflection if you haven't you may not be reading this.

Also if your membership subscription expired within the first half of this year and you have not renewed (look at the date on your Membership Card) we regret this is the last issue of R.D.N. you will receive. ENTITLEMENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LOTTERY ALSO REQUIRES CURRENT MEMBERSHIP OF RDS. A new style RENEWAL FORM is enclosed for those members whose subscription is now due but as we are not infallible please check that we have not missed you and send your remittance (as per the back panel of R.D.N.)

INTERNATIONAL CONTACTS — The Society's International Committee (and in particular the Editor of R.D.N.) is in regular contact with many Rail Advocacy and Transit Users' Groups in North America. One such Group the SOUTH EASTERN TRANSPORTATION COALITION — based in the State of Georgia would welcome short articles from any member of the Society about rail and transit matters in the U.K. Any member who would like to produce such an item is requested to contact the Editor at the address given above.

PHOTOS OF CLOSED LINES — Former National Committee Member Mike Crowhurst would also like to hear from any members who have photographs of railway lines or installations which have since closed so if you have any write to him at 3, Cranford Court, Shakespeare Road, Harpenden, Herts. AL5 5NY.

PUBLISHED BY THE RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY for the exclusive information of its members.

Editor: J.W. Barfield

Jay's Bill on L.T. is debated — then ditched

V

APRIL 23 After the first reading of the Transport (London) Act 1969 (Amendment) Bill on February 9, passed by a majority of 28

Douglas Jay (Lab. Battersea North): opened the second reading debate explaining: "It is a bill designed first, to clarify the law, which is now in confusion, and secondly, to prevent major damage being done to London Transport and London's economy by excessively high fares. It is not a subject for party political slogans."

The Bill retained the principle that LT must balance current revenue and expenditure as far as practicable, but it made clear that grants from the GLC might be counted as revenue by LT. That was already done as an accounting practice by many non-London transport authorities. It left the question of policy and the amount of grant to be decided by the two elected public authorities concerned — the Government for their subsidy and, for the rates grant, the GLC. The car commuter, even though he did not use LT services, was greatly benefitted by their existence.

Great damage was being done to LT. The cautious interpretations of the law by LT meant doing what was commercially impossible: balancing revenue and costs without counting grants from the rates as revenue. This already meant worse services, prohibitive fares, less investment, lost employment, and a vicious circle of decline in LT. Fares would have to go on rising if the legal situation continued. The cut in fares in October 1981 led to a rise in passenger journeys of 11% on buses and 7% on the Underground — a rise in productivity and efficiency, which we are all being urged to promote. The same number of drivers and conductors carried more passengers. That is what productivity means.

The doubling of fares on March 21 (he continued) has already led to a loss of more than 15% in passenger traffic. LT had lost a million bus passengers every day. That is a fall in productivity. We sometimes forget that the LCC tramways were started with low fares 70 or 80 years ago, precisely to help those on very low pay. We are in danger of forgetting that low-cost travel to work benefits the whole community. The cost to the average London domestic ratepayer of the reduced fares introduced last autumn was less per week than the cost of one gallon of petrol.

The situation involves unjustified discrimination against London. In Merseyside the transport authority is given powers that are denied in London. In Greater Manchester BR services raised only 47% of total costs from fares revenue in 1980/81. Tyne & Wear raised only 43% of total costs. BR and the National Bus Company receive substantial subsidies. Sir Peter Masefield has given his support to my Bill. The Government would be saved much future trouble if they took it over.

Mr. Eyre: Here is a Bill which is a parliamentary curiosity: one marketed through advertisements as if it had the remarkable quality of producing enormous financial benefits without any financial costs. It was the unreasonableness of the GLC's actions which produced the present high fares, high-rates position. Two-thirds of London's rates are borne by industry and commerce, which have no votes in the local ballot box, yet whose continued prosperity is vital to all Londoners. Let me spell the right way forward.

Last month the Minister wrote to the GLC requiring it to produce a plan, taking as a starting assumption the level of resources approved following the policies and programmes last year, to spell out how Londoners could get better bus and tube services for this money, to analyse where the money is now being spent and where there is scope to target resources more effectively. London has failed to achieve the levels of productivity of the transport executives in other major conurbations. The GLC has been told that if, when its considered plan is brought forward, we find that any real legal difficulties exist, we are prepared to consider whether amendment of the law is needed. Rushing into instant legislation to turn the clock back is no solution.

After the chaos and incompetence of the last 10 months, the time is clearly at hand for major change in the way that transport is organised in the capital. The Government will set out fully the ideas that are developing for a better organised system, as well as taking a close interest in the proposals that the Select Committee on Transport will shortly put forward. After the disasters, failures and illegality of the so-called experiments of recent months, the set-up cannot be left as it is. If the GLC will not put its house in order, the Government will have to impose their own solution.

Robert Hughes (Lab. Aberdeen North): In his heart the Under-Secretary knows that a good transport system is essential for our capital, and for most capitals. Many major cities throughout the world have heavy public transport subsidies. I refer not to countries that are regarded as pillars of socialism, but to countries such as America, where major cities get high levels of public support. I must dispose of the idea that if tourists spend less on public transport, they have more to spend in the shops and in that way provide for the ratepaying capacity of those very businesses. I wonder what happened to the election manifesto of 1979. I thought the great drive was to free local authorities from Whitehall control, yet the first time an elected local government in the capital shows some initiative, the Government stamp on it and refuse to help.

John Wilkinson (C. Ruislip Northwood): It would be wrong for me to conceal the fact that the latest increases in LT fares, introduced on March 21, are almost intolerable, especially for those who must commute from outlying parts by Underground. Last year my constituents season ticket to King's Cross cost £339. When he renews his ticket it will cost £832. A season ticket from Ruislip or Northwood to the West End costs almost £800.

Last year LT employees received an 11% pay increase from the GLC in May, when the bus drivers had already settled in April for 8%. I believe LT's service is far too important to be left under the jurisdiction of the GLC. It should be made into an autonomous public corporation, the services should be automated and overmanning eradicated. Only when the most fundamental review has taken place should further subsidy be considered. My constituents know the burden of fares they must bear. LT fares have escalated in the last eight years. Inefficiency started long before the change of administration at County Hall but the consequences of what has happened since need to be urgently considered.

Samuel Silkin (Lab. Southwark & Dulwich): It seems extraordinary that London should be under greater restriction than the rest of the country. Congestion in London is greater than elsewhere and therefore its needs are greater. The Minister did not mention the economic consequences of congested roads. My constituency does not have any Underground station, but of the enormous number of letters and petitions I have received in support of Mr. Jay's Bill (and of "Fares Fair") 100 to 1 are in favour, notwithstanding the fact that they will be paying the rates — they have buses, but services are limited — and cannot board a tube train where they live. If people who do not have the immediate benefit of the services that we want to make it easier to provide are not in favour of that provision, that is not my experience.

Neil Thorne (C. Ilford South): The behaviour of the GLC has been scandalous. Much of the money now being spent is for political purposes. Clearly subsidies should be given but kept in proper bounds. Subsidies are given to the Paris system, but there is flexible rostering in Paris. I request the Minister to look at what is happening at the GLC and, if he shares my view that the Council is not conducting itself properly in the running of LT, to take this duty away from it.

Albert Stallard (Lab. St. Pancras North): Members have spoken of letters they have received, and I suspect most of them were in favour of "Fares Fair". Support shown for the GLC's transport policy in correspondence has probably been heavier than that

on any other issue for the last two or three years. I have received hundreds of letters from people who support the Government on every other issue except this one, and who are now asking me to impress on the Government the need for the Bill, to get the position back to what it was.

Dale Campbell-Savours (Lab. Workington) (intervening): Support for the Bill goes far and wide. In Workington the Bill can have an impact on the jobs of 400 people. We produce the Titan bus for London. The low fares policy of the GLC under Ken Livingstone increased bus orders. Throughout the country — and certainly in my constituency — there is firm support for this legislation.

Mr. Stallard: That underlines what we have been saying in London — that it is not solely a London problem.

Tom Graham (Lab. Co-op Enfield, Edmonton) (intervening): I have received a letter which says: "I am Tory by nature, but would like to think unselfish. I have lived in a number of European cities which subsidised public transport and cannot praise enough the cleaner, less polluted, more used (consequently more efficient) amenities at the expense of a small rate supplement, which can be repaid with a little use of a much improved system. Yours, Tory, house and car owner."

Mr. Stallard: All of us could repeat that letter.

Michael Shersby (C. Uxbridge): I am in favour of cheap fares, but it is wrong to finance them out of the rates. I have received strong representations from retired constituents urging me to oppose a return to cheap fares at the expense of ratepayers. I am strongly in favour of subsidies.

As the time limit was approaching, **Mr. Jay** intervened to move that "the question be put" (thus to allow the Bill to pass through its further stages.)

Deputy Speaker Bernard Weatherill (C. Croydon NE): replied that 14 other members wished to speak, and the debate (briefly summarised above) had lasted less than two hours. **Robert Mellish** (Lab. Bermondsey): asked for the debate to be closed. "This is a fundamental matter on which the House wants the opportunity to vote." *The Deputy Speaker refused.* Mr. Shersby continued speaking and was stopped by the time limit. The debate was due to be resumed on May 7, but in the event was further postponed, so the Bill appears to be virtually dead.

MAY 6 **Derek Foster** (Lab. Bishop Auckland): put down an early day motion viewing "with grave concern the proposed closure of BR Engineering's works at Shildon, Co. Durham." This was signed by 93 MPs. **David Stoddart** (Lab. Swindon): added an amendment, deploring the partial closure of Swindon works, which was signed by 13 MPs. **Frank Hooley** (Lab. Heeley) added a further amendment, urging that, "their wealth of skills and expertise should be used to help third world countries in the development of much-needed railway networks."

The motion was not debated.

G.L.C. MAY LOSE CONTROL OF L.T.

MAY 12 * **Alfred Dubs** (Lab. Battersea South): Have you received any representations concerning legislation affecting LT fares?

Mr. Eyre: The Minister has discussed the matter with LT and the unions. It is two months since he asked the GLC to prepare a balanced plan.

Mr. Dubs: LT does not know whether it would be legal to make capital investment at present: is it not utterly frustrated?

Mr. Eyre: There is a misunderstanding. Considerable resources are available to the GLC.

Roger Sims (C. Chislehurst): If action is not taken soon by the GLC, will the Minister step in and take action himself?

Mr. Eyre: There is widespread support for removing responsibility for LT from the GLC.

William Hamilton (Lab. Fife Central): Where?

Mr. Eyre: We have been examining a number of ideas. The Minister will act as necessary.

Mr. Jay: May I remedy this misunderstanding? By sitting around and doing nothing while LT sinks into chaos, the Minister is failing to carry out the job for which he is paid.

Mr. Eyre: The Minister said he would be glad to hear from the Leader of the GLC how work on the plan was proceeding. It is up to the GLC to respond.

John Wheeler (C. Paddington): When will something be done about the overmanning and inefficiency that lead to high fares?

Mr. Eyre: Matters with regard to the conduct of transport are for LT.

Albert Booth (Lab. Barrow-in-Furness): LT has estimated that fare increases will result in a 17% drop in bus and 12% drop in tube passengers. That points to LT being forced to operate a skeleton service for a largely stay-at-home population?

Mr. Eyre: Fares are too high, but that is the fault of the GLC for the crazy circumstances it has produced. Reports of loss of patronage are exaggerated.

MARCH 25 The Travel Concessions (London) Bill — providing senior citizens with continuing free fares on London Transport when other fares were doubled — was given a third reading in the House of Lords and passed. *Lord Bellwin* (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment) said: "Senior citizens outside the GLC area who use London tubes will not have the free concessionary fares that apply in London. The maximum some will pay will increase from 80p to £1.20. Couples who are pensioners living, say, in estates built by the GLC outside their area will pay £2.40 to travel to see their relatives in Inner London, as against 40p now."

MARCH 31 In a written reply to *Ian Grist* (C. Cardiff North), who asked about BR's financial support for the current year.

Mr. Howell said: He had announced last November an exceptional increase of £110 million in the grant paid to the BRB in 1981. This increase recognised the deterioration in passenger revenue in 1981. In its claim for grants for 1982 the Board had to demonstrate that firm action had been taken on unit costs. The Board originally submitted a claim for £885 million, or £60 million above the grant in 1981. "Most of this results from increases in cost rather than a fall in revenue. I judge that the grant for 1982 should be £810m. Because of the change in national insurance surcharge, this is now reduced to £804 million."

The level now settled accords with the decision that the loss caused by the ASLEF dispute should not be met at the taxpayers' expense, and that any excess on the 1981-82 external financing limit will be offset against the limit for 1982-83. The board's commitment to accelerated disposal of assets will make an important contribution."

After this hectic morning delegates split up into 3 Workshops to discuss:-

- Fares Policy:** which concluded that BR's existing fares structure was too complex; that it was important to get across to people the true cost of motoring and revealed strong support for an "Investors' Railcard" to fill the gap left by other more well-known offers and possibly replace some of them;
- How to win friends and influence people:** which came up with many useful suggestions in this field, such as the need to be well-informed (i.e. through contact with BR and local authorities) and finally;
- How to gain, keep and involve members:** (it was important to build up a substantial membership, who should be made to feel they were getting something for their money).

The concluding plenary session dealt with proposals for the future, including the need:- for continued co-operation between RDS and Users' Groups; continued pressure for electrification and construction of a Channel Tunnel; a higher level of contact with M.P.s; a proposed book on rail/re-opening schemes and for Groups to respond to the Green Paper on Nationalised Industries' Consumer Councils, urging that the T.U.C.C.s be given more teeth.

All in all it was the biggest and best Conference the Society has organised to date not only as regards the number of delegates and Groups represented but in relation to the press coverage which a speaker of Mr Buckton's calibre was able to attract. Furthermore many delegates went home with a somewhat more informed view of the Unions' side in the disputes which at present unfortunately still plague BR.

To keep the momentum going (as reported elsewhere in this issue) further campaigns are planned for the Autumn.

Regional Notes

LONDON & HOME COUNTIES

Members in all areas will rejoice that London — following the example of Newcastle-on-Tyne — is considering tentative plans for a light railway. The trains could run alongside road traffic "like trams" says the Greater London Council's pamphlet introducing the idea. One, two and three car trains are suggested, and the proposal seems to be for a lighter type of system than the Tyneside one.

The object is to provide better public transport between the City of London and the Docklands area which is being redeveloped. The scheme has not yet been thought out in much detail, but tentative plans are on display in public libraries in East London and interested parties were invited to send comments to the GLC (TD/A/PR), County Hall, Freeport, SE1 1BP. Even now it might be worth while writing to urge the advantages of light rail over buses, despite the initial cost, estimated at £50m. for the first phase. Speed — up to 50 mph — and easy access would be the outstanding advantages, whilst the cost would be much less than that of an eastward extension of the Jubilee Line, as originally planned, and less damaging to the environment (than buses).

The troubles of London Transport have greatly exercised London & Home Counties Branch throughout the winter but whilst passengers settle down to the return to higher fares we have some problems on British Rail. Correspondence continues with B.R. (LMR) over the adequacy (or otherwise) of the services proposed on the Midland City Line when electrification is complete — that is if the electric units ever get out of the Depot at Cricklewood due to an industrial dispute. More importantly the Branch was represented at the T.U.C.C. Inquiry into the closure of Broad Street Station (held at the Gt. Eastern Hotel on 20th April) where — together with the North London Line Committee and representatives of close on 200 objectors — it put to the Committee its reasons why the proposed temporary station to be provided by B.R. at Worship St. (during the re-development of Liverpool Street Station) was not a satisfactory alternative.

It could in the long run prejudice the future of the North London Line as a whole and our objection was augmented by evidence from East Anglian Branch Chairman, Steve Wilkinson, who described graphically how satisfactory interchange between Liverpool Street and the Broad Street — Richmond Line for Inter-city passengers from his area would be made virtually impossible by the arrangements at present put forward by B.R. The general impression gained from the Inquiry was that the TUCC were less than satisfied with B.R.'s proposals and if it were to be allowed to close Broad Street it would have to come up with something better than what NLLC spokesman Stephen Joseph described as a "souped up Portakabin."

At the time of writing the Committee's report is awaited but we feel that the re-development of Liverpool Street should not be achieved at the expense of the North London Line which has a vital and continuing role to play.

Looking to the future a well-attended meeting of Branch members on 12th May heard a fascinating exposition on the Maglev "people mover" designed to transfer passengers rapidly from one location to another at stations, ports and airports. Speaking at Friends House, London, Mr. Bill Johnson of GEC Transportation projects, explained how BR would have liked to use Maglev to provide a connection between the harbour and hoverport at Dover to obviate the time-wasting process of bussing passengers from the Hoverport to Dover Priory Station — at a cost of £500,000 a year. Unfortunately the possible hiving-off of Sealink from BR has effectively stymied this project. Incidentally this privatisation was delayed when, at the end of March, the British Rail (Divestment of Assets) Bill was unexpectedly defeated by 166/152 votes. Maglev is however now being installed at Birmingham International to serve the adjacent airport and Exhibition Halls. Each vehicle will travel at up to 40 mph and carry 40 passengers and the system is due to be completed and in operation by April 1983.

As reported in the last issue (p.4) Branch Committee Member H. Trevor Jones has expressed concern about the future of the Tunbridge Wells — Hastings line when the present purpose built diesel units come to the end of their useful life. Local M.P. Patrick Mayhew has obtained an assurance from the Minister that there are no proposals to close the line but if present constraints continue this is not very convincing. One consolation, however, is that the route to Hastings via the much threatened line thro Rye and Ashford is not much further (and certainly preferable to a lengthy detour via Eastbourne) but an assurance of adequate investment to secure the future of the present heavily trafficked line would be the preferable solution and continued pressure will be exerted to this end.

More than half the copies of the Branch's Anniversary Book "Ten Years On" have been sold but the book is still available at £1.20 (post free) from Peter Lawrence, 75, Marlpit Lane, Norwich, NR5 8XN.

WEST MIDLANDS

At Kingsbury, south of Tamworth, 200 villagers packed the school hall on 21st April to hear of RDS plans to secure a new station by a public appeal for funds. A local committee has met and started preliminary work. On 29th April a meeting was arranged on the Walsall/Sandwell border for a suggested station to serve the three large estates just south of Bescot. The next public meeting will be in Hednesford, late June, to promote a new Cannock line service and to publicise an RDS excursion from Rugeley and Walsall to Bewdley (SVR) on 10th July. Our associated Walsall Group also ran an enjoyable trip to Matlock on 15th May.

The introduction of more (and faster) HST services on the NE/SW routes is being supported by much media publicity and adoption of the "Heart Line" title for the route. A new Handbook for Timetable 51 is being issued free by BR. For the first time a Paddington departure (at 06.50) runs via Reading, Coventry, Birmingham and Crewe direct to Glasgow and Edinburgh. The Pope's visit to Coventry on Sunday 30th May led BR to provide hundreds of extra trains to Leamington Spa; an 8-car shuttle from Leicester — running every 20 mins. throughout the previous night; and a 10 min. interval EMU service all-night from New Street (Birmingham) fed by many extra local trains. Sir Peter Parker opened an extended rail-head at Kings Norton in May for loading IBL cars and lorries; and a recently opened and improved loading facility at Bordesley is also exporting vast numbers of L/H drive "Metro" cars for the Continent.

Approval has been given for a £12,000 feasibility study to plan the implementation of a regular Walsall — Wolverhampton EMU shuttle, as suggested by the local Branch of RDS, which would take just 11 minutes for the non-stop journey (the bus takes 29 mins.) The PTE has also reported that two new stations at Moor Street and Snow Hill plus the re-opening of the intermediate city tunnel will cost £7m. and the County Council has approved further expenditure on preparatory work. RDS is now represented on 3 new Transport Advisory Committees serving areas of the West Midlands County. Finally arrival of the Class 210 DEMU 3 & 4 car commuter trains is eagerly awaited for expected trials on the (Table 55) cross-city line.

EAST ANGLIA

The first in our series of special trains for 1982 was a joint affair organised by RDS and Wymondham — Dereham Rail Action Committee to Matlock on Saturday 15th May. The loco-hauled excursion carried 300 passengers off the freight-only Dereham branch in Norfolk. Following the tradition maintained over the last three years, a seaside special will also be run from the branch — this year's being to Felixstowe on Sunday 22nd August. Details of the latter may be obtained from Mr. J.S. Hull, Cydonia Cottage, Station Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk.

RDS has welcomed the award of a Sec. 8 grant to Barrington Cement Works, just off the Cambridge — Hitchin line. It is some 4 years since we started supporting local villagers in their bid to get as much as possible of the traffic associated with this factory to go by rail rather than road. We have also been in close contact with the recently-formed Camgrain consortium, to the south of Cambridge, in the hope that it will send its grain by rail.

RDS gave evidence at the Third (and Final?) Ipswich by-pass inquiry at the end of April putting the rail alternative to this road scheme (£18 million for the western section). A cheaper, less extravagant scheme was advocated by Branch Secretary, Trevor Garrod, who also used the opportunity to point out the relatively modest cost of rail improvements which could be achieved by electrification of the Felixstowe line.

Predictably, the Department of Transport officials who are employed to build roads maintained that anything less than their own grandiose scheme would be insufficient for future traffic levels. It was noteworthy, however, that they spent more time and effort rebutting the alternatives we put than on previous occasions.

By contrast, a copy of a speech by a senior BR official has come into the Branch's hands which makes interesting reading for it floats the idea of "singling" the main line from Haughley Junc. northwards to Norwich when electrification is to be carried out (by 1987). Whilst the Society is not opposed to realistic economies by BR we feel that this one would be a retrograde step and one which is strangely in contrast to the strident demands of the road lobby for dual carriageway roads to Norwich! In subsequent correspondence with the Branch, the official concerned has suggested that money saved thereby could enable BR to complete the Cambridge electrification which the Secretary of State, in his wisdom has declined to approve.

It is the attitude of mind of such officials that is the most worrying to the Society and the Branch is not letting the matter rest there. We would therefore like to see a united effort by all members of the railway community to see that BR gets the best possible deal from the Government and is not palmed off with "second best". (It is a well-known fact that electrification can produce a "sparks" effect leading to extra traffic which would undoubtedly soon "saturate" a singled line to Norwich so such suggestions are the economics of the madhouse! Ed. — Remember what happened between Perth and Inverness)

Finally Branch members Steve Wilkinson and Peter Wakefield have been active on its behalf (and of the Society's International Cttee.) in opposing cuts in the Sealink train ferry service from Harwich to Zeebrugge and felt somewhat vindicated in their action by the news (early in May) that a backlog of 282 train ferry wagons had built up at the Belgian port and that Sealink was telling its Continental customers not to send any more. Locally a run-down of this service would mean less freight on East Anglia's cross-country rail links.

YORKSHIRE

In West Yorkshire the opening of new stations proceeds apace. In February, Fitzwilliam near Wakefield (on the Leeds to Doncaster line) was completed at a cost of only £76,000. Deighton, near Huddersfield, was opened in April and in mid-May Crossflats near Keighley. It has since been reported that the new stations are all being well-supported. Slaithwaite station is expected to open in the Autumn.

Following the success of the Yorkshire T.U.C.C.'s "Open Forum" in Harrogate last October a similar gathering was held in Sheffield on 13th May. The bulk of the session centred round BR's new Timetable which came in for intense criticism. The main points being that peak hour trains had been taken off or re-timed so as to lose their effectiveness; late evening trains to and from other parts of the country had been taken off and on many of the services there were long gaps in the timetable. The direct service between Leeds and Sheffield had been decimated, whilst Rotherham, had no train to Leeds after 1.0p.m.

The South Yorkshire PTE has said that it has no plans to re-open or build new stations within its area other than a long-term one for a new Central Station in Rotherham, which would be dependent on approval of developments on the Sheffield — Doncaster line. The Nottingham — Glasgow trains which have now been re-routed via Manchester are to travel between Sheffield and Chesterfield via Beighton so as to avoid the need to reverse at Sheffield. The Harwich Boat Trains will follow the same route.

LANCASHIRE & CUMBRIA

The Ormskirk to Preston Travellers' Association, in conjunction with the local group of the Ramblers' Association, ran a "Rail Ramble" to the Cumbrian Coast on Bank Holiday Monday (31st May). So far as is known this was the first excursion from the line in at least ten years. As only one station on the line is staffed there were problems in selling tickets. In order to get round this OPTA appointed two local representatives to organise party bookings for people in Burscough and Croston. If more excursions were to originate from the line it was essential that the above was a success so OPTA produced hundreds of leaflets for local display and distribution. On a more general note BR have agreed to re-time a regular train for OPTA from the October Timetable Supplement. The 07.50 Preston — Ormskirk is to be brought forward to 07.44 thus allowing commuters to connect with the 08.23 Ormskirk — Liverpool (Central) fast train.

In May BR cut the two Blackpool (South) — Manchester trains. This was viewed by users as signalling the beginning of the end for the service so RDS organised a public meeting in Lytham on April 13th to set up a South Fylde Line Users' Assn. (for Kirkham — Blackpool South). This was attended by over 100 people and heard speeches by Trevor Garrod and David Harrison, the local BR Divisional Passenger Manager. Since formation SFLUA has had three more meetings; plans two more and has already enrolled 100 members. Its immediate objectives are:-

- (1) Restoration of the through trains to Manchester in the October Supplement;
- (2) Extension of the Kirkham — Blackpool South shuttle to/from Preston;
- (3) Reintroduction of the Sunday service with improved connections; and
- (4) Opening of new halts at Moss Side and Wrea Green; and a campaign of lobbying the TUCC, BR, local Councillors and MPs has begun in order to achieve the first objective.

Following the running of an excursion to London the Southport Rail Travellers' Association have doubled their membership to 50 and are planning to campaign over the cuts to the Summer Saturday holiday trains on the Manchester — Southport line (dropped from 17th May). Meanwhile representatives of STELLA (Support the East Lancs. Line Assn.) have handed in a petition to Tom Brazier, Divisional Manager of BR at Preston with 3,000 signatures protesting at plans to single the line from Gannow Junc. (Burnley) to Chaffers Sidings (nr. Colne). Local MPs were present at the ceremony carried out at Nelson station.

Finally Lancs. C.C. have recently produced their "Rail Strategy for Lancashire" — the main objective of which is: "to alert Central Government to the view of the Lancashire authorities that further deterioration of local rail services is unacceptable and to support the plea by BR that urgent and greater financial assistance, both revenue and capital, is required from Central Government." Notwithstanding the County Council have put very limited amounts of money on the table for three station re-openings schemes, namely: Moss Side (between Kirkham and Lytham) — £10,000; Midge Hall (between Preston and Croston) and Lostock Hall (between Preston and Bamber Bridge) — £140,000. and is also considering funding a public address system on the East Lancs. Line at a cost of £110,000.

BR (with the support of GMC and the authorities of Manchester International Airport - MIA) is to promote a Parliamentary Bill in the 1982-3 session for the building of a rail link with the airport. It is planned to build a spur giving direct access to both Manchester and Crewe (via the Styal line). A terminal loop would be built to facilitate through running of locomotive-hauled trains.

LINCOLNSHIRE

By mid-May the Secretary of State had still not delivered his verdict on the future of the March - Spalding line and so that service still appears in the new BR Timetable. Spalding station in fact dealt with 28 specials for this Year's Flower Festival, so we are informed but could it still cope in future years if the March line is cut?

During February the threatened avoiding lines at both Sleaford and Lincoln were in regular use by diverted HSTs when there was a landslide on the ECML. Lincoln (St. Marks) station could however close under a BR plan to divert all trains to Central station. The Society is not necessarily opposed to this idea, but questions the wisdom, in this case, of closing the city's avoiding line as well.

SOUTH MIDLANDS

The crowning achievement of the Society's local Branch in North Hertfordshire reached fruition on 17th May when at 6.23 a.m. a train pulled into the new station at Watton-at-Stone, on the line between Kings Cross and Hitchin) 43 years after the last train stopped there. 70 people, young and old made the inaugural journey although the official opening, by Sir Peter Parker, was not due to take place until 15th June. So ended many months of campaigning and canvassing for funds which made the whole project possible by the RDS and the local Parish Council and we are confident that this will be the forerunner of many similar projects in the future. Hearty congratulations are therefore due to Branch Secretary, Mike Hadley, and his Committee for this tangible slice of railway development.

Another red letter day for BR was the opening, on 14th May, by the Prince of Wales of Milton Keynes Central, a station with 5 platforms on the WCML to Scotland, now reached by inter-city trains from Euston in 39 minutes. For once in a way BR is giving the station excellent promotion, parking for 600 cars being provided free for one year.

Thames Valley Area Representative, Tom Comber, issued a further local Newsletter in May in which he graphically described the inauguration of the first through train from Oxford to Edinburgh and Glasgow (See W.M. Notes above) on 17th May but added "when the Minister (of Transport) has completed his M40, M45, M50s..... will the Department of Transport (alias the Road Lobby) realise its long-cherished ambition of dismantling the entire rail system and provide a daily coach from Oxford to Glasgow, using the old rail bed across Shap Fell so that passengers can endure 10 cramped hours (allowing for convenience stops) of motorway misery. (the train at present takes 6 hrs. 38 mins.)

Our associated local rail users' group the "Cotswold Line Promotion Group" has recently had a change of officers, the Secretary now being Miss M. Sassoon, 11, Toy Lane, Chipping Norton, Oxon. OX7 5FH. and the Chairman, Mr. Christopher Ambury, Slad's Lodge, Over Norton, OX7 5PX. Regarding the activities of the Group Tom Comber comments:- "from Oxford to Worcester there are 6 DMUs a day and one to Moreton-in-Marsh only. Only one of these services the halts at Hanborough, Combe, Finstock

and Ascot-under-Wychwood. Could not a "stop on request" system be instituted - as on the Central Wales Line? If BR would show willing to give the scheme a trial - say for 2 years - we of RDS could rise from our Rail Supporters' armchairs and spend a Saturday knocking on doors and drinking in the pubs of Finstock or even Ashdown-under-Wychwood." On the more general scene plans for a local meeting of RDS members are at present at an advanced stage!

LOW FARES - KEY TO THE FUTURE OF O.P.S.

One of the more significant conclusions of the 1981 Annual Report of the Central Transport Consultative Committee (the official national committee representing rail passengers)* was that a "low fares" exercise should be carried out in B.R.'s Other Provincial Services Sector.

This follows the deliberations of a special Sub-Committee set up to study the fares policy of a number of other countries which concluded that such an experiment (similar to the general reduction in railway fares carried out in Sweden in 1979), if successful, could increase the volume of passengers, upgrade the relevance of the O.P.S. network and benefit the remainder of the railway system through increased contributory revenue, as traffic volume on them was generally low, there was a good deal of spare capacity and they were relatively free from commuter traffic peaks. It therefore recommended an exercise on two groups of lines, one perhaps in the North East and the other in the East Midlands/East Anglia.

Following on from its Report "The Missing Link" on the problems of Bus/Rail Interchange, the Committee reported that its discussions with B.R. and the County Councils' Assn. appeared to be reaping satisfactory results and opportunities for improving access to the rail network for non-rail served communities, by establishing feeder bus and coach services were also being examined.

The Committee had also written to the Minister, in September, urging him to give publicly an assurance that the closure of rural rail services would not be allowed, but more importantly, it had held discussions with the BRB on the implications of the 1981 Act (promoted by Tony Speller M.P.) and considered that the Board should respond in a positive way to the opportunities it opened up (for the experimental re-opening of stations and lines to a passenger service). This is a measure which the Society has given strong support and our Re-Opening's Sub-Committee will undoubtedly be putting similar pressure on B.R.

* C.T.C.C. April 1982 Para. 23

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EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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Mr. Bevan is responsible for REGIONAL NOTES, Mr. Barfield for all other material. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in October) all material must be in the hands of the appropriate Editor by WEDNESDAY 11th AUGUST.

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BROAD STREET - R.D.S. & N.L.L.C. Vindicated

Further to the report on page 10 it would not be an exaggeration to say that the T.U.C.C. for London (in its report to the Minister - contained in a Press Statement dated 25th June 1982) has fully vindicated the stand taken by the local Branch of R.D.S. and the North London Line Committee at the Enquiry on 20th April, when it concluded that if Broad Street Station were closed and the train service diverted to a temporary terminus at Worship Street, some 500 yds. from Broad Street/Liverpool Street, hardship would arise for the majority of the present users (of the Broad Street - Richmond Line).

The Committee also expressed extreme disquiet that the arrangement would destroy the present convenient Broad St./Liverpool St. station interchange and impose hardship on users, especially the elderly and handicapped. In these circumstances the T.U.C.C. were fully convinced that such hardship could and should be avoided by the provision of temporary high-level platforms on the existing site. If this were not feasible it recommended that a connecting bus service should be provided between Worship Street and Liverpool Street (during the operating hours of the North London Line) and that the interchange arrangements between the North London Line and the G.N. lines at Highbury & Islington should be upgraded by the provision of a more direct subway access.

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Finally it recommended that closure should not take place until all financial, contractual and timescale arrangements had been fully co-ordinated and that it would also be a helpful gesture if the planned linking curve at Graham Road (between the eastern arm of the North London Line - to Docklands - and the Lee Valley line into Liverpool Street) were undertaken as a prerequisite of the whole redevelopment, thereby alleviating some of the fears expressed about the future of the North London Line.

Whether this latter suggestion will be attractive to residents of Dalston, Haggerston and Shoreditch is debateable but the Branch Committee will continue its discussions with all interested parties to ensure that the final decision (which rests with the Minister of Transport) will be no less favourable.

NOTE - FOR THE ATTENTION OF MEMBERS ONLY

Members' Handbook Part A

Please note that the address of Mr W.J.H. Apsey is now: 33A, Fournier Street, London E1 6QE

Delete M.J. Hadley who has resigned.

G.N.O.S. Branch has been wound up.