

DOCKLAND DEVELOPMENTS —HOW LIGHT RAIL MAY BE AFFECTED

London, years behind Newcastle with its admirable Tyne and Wear Metro, got off to a late start with light rail — but it is making up for lost time. The Docklands Light Railway is expected to be completed months before its July 1987 opening date, thus allowing twelve weeks in which to train staff.

The 7.5 mile system, although smaller than that on Tyneside, is lighter and more like a tramway. The GLC, which advocates light rail in suitable London areas, originally hoped that the Docklands line would run along the centre of Mile End Road, with pedestrian crossings at the stops.

Perhaps we should have stuck to that idea," a GLC spokesperson said recently, pointing out that the bridge which was to be used instead (to carry the line across the main road), had not proved strong enough and has had to be renewed.

Costing £77m, the system is far cheaper to construct than deep tube (Docklands was originally intended to be served by an extension of the Jubilee Line from Charing Cross), but, unfortunately, it will be isolated from the underground, except at Stratford. The nearest terminus to the city, Tower Gateway, will be in Minories — a few steps from

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RAIL LINKS TO YARMOUTH: VICTORY!

Great Yarmouth is served by two rail routes, both single track, from Norwich, via Acle and Reedham respectively. Track and sleepers on the Reedham route are in urgent need of renewal and BR, which has had to take regular cuts in its Public Service Obligation payment from the Government, was finding itself hard pressed to find the £105,000 needed over each of the next five years for renewal of this link. It was therefore proposing to close completely Reedham — Yarmouth and to single Brundall — Reedham. This would adversely affect services from Norwich to both Lowestoft and Yarmouth.

The East Norfolk and Suffolk Alliance was formed last year when this threat was first raised. The Alliance was formed on the initiative of Great Yarmouth Borough Council and was joined by several other local councils and interest groups, including RDS. During the summer and early autumn of 1985 we argued the need to find cash to help BR maintain this link, and as a result four District Councils, two Parish Councils, the Great Yarmouth Port & Haven Commissioners and the Broads Authority all promised financial contributions. RDS and two local users' groups also pledged token contributions.

The one body which refused to contribute was Norfolk County Council's Planning & Transport Committee — chaired by Cllr. Ian Coutts, who also went on local radio advocating the closure of 100 miles of railway in the county. However, we wrote to all councillors, and several RDS members also wrote personal letters to their particular elected representatives. It was therefore with delight and satisfaction that we heard the news on 28th October that the full Council had overturned its Committee's decision and had agreed to give money to help BR.

Thus the Alliance has succeeded in raising £52,500 towards the maintaining of this 8-mile link and, at the time of writing, BR is expected to match this offer pound for pound and ensure the future of the line. This is the first time for eleven years that Norfolk County Council has given any financial support to railways in the county; equally encouraging is the willingness of the other councils and authorities to pledge money — for several of them, it is also the first time.

Trevor Garrod



Dave Wetzel, of the late GLC, wields super scissors to mark the completion of an improvement scheme, partly funded by that body, at Rectory Road. Sadly, with the demise of the GLC, scenes like this will be no more.

Photo: Greater London Council

MEMBERS PLATFORM

Sir,
As correspondent for the Icknield Branch notes, I feel that John Brodribb will have been pleased to see no Icknield notes in RW26. In view of his comprehensive negative criticism, can we expect him to take over the editor's chair and bring the magazine to the standard of "Modern Railways" within the next two issues?

yours sincerely

Lyndon Elias
Slough
Berks.

HUMBERLINK FARES ANOMOLY SETTLED AFTER FIVE YEARS

Five years of campaigning has brought success for R.D.S. member Brian Hastings in a bid to introduce a wider range of fares for passengers joining at paytrain stations on the Cleethorpes - Scunthorpe - Doncaster - Sheffield and also the Cleethorpes - Barton on Humber section of Humberlink. A new fare chart, introduced on January 12th and covering both routes, means that guards will, in future, issue not only single tickets but also cheap day and ordinary returns.

Mr. Hastings, who lives at Crowle, a paytrain station between Scunthorpe and Doncaster, first took up the quest (to have cheap day return tickets issued by guards) some five years ago. After an initial approach to the former Divisional Manager at Doncaster, then the area management at Immingham, success finally came after Crowle was transferred to the territory of the Area Manager, Doncaster.

Announcing the wider range of tickets available for on-train issue, British Rail have told Mr. Hastings that they feel more passengers will be attracted by the greater convenience of being able to purchase return tickets, while those buying cheap day return tickets will, of course, make a substantial saving. Mr. Hastings had himself made the valid point that rural paytrain users were previously disadvantaged through not having access to day return fares - which had previously been issued to passengers joining the same trains at manned stations.

Using poster displays and leaflets, Mr. Hastings has advertised the new range of fares in his own and surrounding villages. The local press carried a very detailed survey of the new fares prior to their introduction.

As an example of the attractive day return fares available from Crowle from January 12th, Mr. Hastings cites Crowle to: Grimsby £3.60 (£6.00), Doncaster

£1.80 (£3.20), Scunthorpe £1.50 (£2.20) and Sheffield £2.90 (£4.20). The figures in brackets represent the cost of two singles which applied previously.

B. J. Hastings.

DOCKLANDS - from page 1

Fenchurch Street station and a short walk from the nearest underground, Tower Hill. The GLC, when responsible for London Transport, had wanted an interchange at Aldgate East, but this had been considered too expensive.

Dramatic changes in the system may, however, become necessary, in consequence of a huge proposed banking development at Canary Wharf, in the Isle of Dogs. The GLC describes the Docklands Development Corporation as being "besotted" by this prospect. A privately funded underground extension from Minories to Bank station is being considered, the cost no longer being an obstacle.

Initially, eleven trains are being built to meet a peak requirement of nine sets, with two spare, which would provide a service interval of seven minutes. The articulated vehicles will have an overall length of 92 feet (compared with a BR standard coach length of 64 feet) and will take 88 seated and 139 standing passengers. The trains are not designed for underground running, being only four inches narrower than a BR carriage and having observation windows (rather than walk-through doors) at front and back. If these vehicles are required to work underground then side walkways, for emergency use, will have to be provided in the tunnels.

The trains, with a top speed of 50 mph, will operate automatically - with an "operator" on board to work the doors and look after the safety of passengers. Overhead current collection, although considered, was thought by some to be environmentally damaging, hence the choice of a shielded third rail at 750 volts dc - which will also be better protected from ice and snow.

An eastward extension of the line to the proposed Stolport at Beckton, via the Royal Docks, has now been indefinitely postponed.

There are constant rumours that the line, originally planned as part of London Transport, will be privatised. This might well preclude the use of Travelcards on the line.

After the present modest system has opened next year, it will doubtless grow and adapt to future transport requirements in Docklands. It may, eventually, have to accommodate much heavier trains than it was designed for, while traffic demands could far exceed the original planned capacity.

Jack Ellis

SPONSORED CYCLE RIDES

Four R.D.S. members - all from the Eastern Region - have, so far, expressed their willingness to undertake sponsored cycle rides as part of National Bike Week (May 24th to 31st).

Yorkshire Branch member Chris Hyomes plans to ride from Bradford to Sheffield, publicising the lack of a direct rail service between the two cities.

At least three members will do a sponsored ride in East Anglia, promoting the "train and bike" combination. Provisionally, this ride will be on Saturday May 31st. The destination will be Histon (near Cambridge), which is on one of the freight-only lines for which we are campaigning for a restored passenger service.

More volunteers are welcome and should contact Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road., Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ, by the end of April. Sponsor form will be available by the middle of that month.

BOOKSHELF

Railroaded by Simon Bain (Faber and Faber £3.95).

This recently published book, in its account and analysis of the Woodhead closure, provides insight into the political decisions behind transport planning and policy from the sixties to the present. The run down of the route, which was used as justification for its ultimate demise, and the anatomy of the campaign against closure are described, as are industrial relations in the rail industry during the critical period 1979 to 1983. This book, which has been widely and sympathetically reviewed on radio, television and in the press, contains important lessons for those of us who would campaign against rail closures.

KW.

BEDFORDSHIRE SEASIDE SPECIAL

On Saturday 3rd May the Bedford to Bletchley Rail Users' Association will operate a special train "The Kent Coast Express". Departure from Bedford will be at approximately 8.15 a.m. and the train will also pick up at all stations to Bletchley and Leighton Buzzard.

Destinations are Canterbury, Dover, Folkestone and the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway. Fares are from under £10 and details and booking forms can be obtained from Richard Crane at 23, Hatfield Crescent, Bedford, MK41 9RA.

REGIONAL NOTES

LONDON & HOME COUNTIES

On 17th February a packed Committee Room at County Hall was the scene of the Branch A.G.M. when retiring Chairman, John Barfield, in summing up his Annual Report forecast that the respite over the closure of Marylebone, achieved by the court proceedings initiated by the G.L.C., Brent and other local Boroughs would not last much longer. In the event a letter was received the next day confirming that the Appeal Committee of the House of Lords had, on 30th January, refused leave to appeal against the decision of the Court of Appeal (reported in our last issue) and that the next meeting of the Joint Local Authorities Working Party was to be held on 5th March.

The highlight of the evening was, however, the talk given by G.L.C. Transport Chair, Dave Wetzel, who kept the 60-70 members present spellbound for over an hour recounting what the Council had achieved since 1981 and what future he saw for transport in London after 1st April. In his Vote of Thanks, Vice Chairman, Frank Tomlins, said that many of the things the G.L.C. had achieved in recent years could not easily be undone and that perhaps in a few years time a more enlightened Government might find it necessary to reinvent a similar body to replace it.

Cllr Wetzel replied that there was much truth in this sentiment and said he would always remember his association with RDS (both in London and Scotland) and departed to acclamation. The new Branch Chairman appointed at the meeting is H.Trevor Jones, editor of the Branch's new Guidebook "Kent & East Sussex by Rail" details of which appear elsewhere in this issue.

John Barfield

EAST ANGLIA

On 7th February construction work started on the new 2.4km line from Trimley to Felixstowe Dock, and the first freight trains should be using the line in the Autumn. RDS has consistently supported this scheme for five years. It will help boost BR's share of traffic from this major port, and encourages us in our continuing campaign for electrification of the Felixstowe line and the laying of continuous welded rail on sections of it.

We also take a keen interest in the other rail-served ports in our area, and we shall welcome Sealink's Port Manager, Colin Crawford, as a guest speaker at our Spring Meeting. This will be held in Ipswich Town Hall at 7.30p.m. on Tuesday 20th May.

Sunday 25th May will see our first special train of the year on the freight only Dereham Branch. The organizers of the biennial Dereham Festival have asked RDS and the Wymondham-Dereham Rail Action Committee to organize an excursion train as part of the festivities, and we have negotiated to run one to Sheringham.

Trevor Garrod

EAST MIDLANDS

Saturday 17th May will see a major RDS meeting at the YMCA, Leicester, at 2.0p.m. The purpose of the meeting will be to launch the new Rail Guide "Five Shires by Rail" and to promote the campaign for Midland Main Line Electrification.

Both the East Midlands and North Midlands Branches will continue the promotion of the book AND the proposed electrification with an exhibition touring major local libraries during the summer.

Trevor Garrod

NORTH WEST

The North West Branch of RDS will be holding a meeting on Saturday 26th April at the Stafford Hotel, City Road, Chester (five minutes' walk from the station) starting at 2p.m. The theme of the meeting will be "The Future of Railways in Cheshire" and it is hoped that there will be speakers from Cheshire County Council and BR.

Andrew Macfarlane

NORTH MIDLANDS

We eagerly anticipate introduction of the May timetable. BR is opening a new station at Langley Mill to be served by Nottingham to Leeds "Sprinter" DMUs.

A new coast to coast link is provided by a Liverpool - Sheffield - Nottingham Yarmouth train, giving better North West to East Anglia connections for which the RDS has campaigned for some time.

The Branch A.G.M. will be held on Friday 25th April at 72, Empress Road, Derby at 7.30p.m.

Malcolm Goodall

SCOTLAND

There is local resistance to the proposed singling of the Nithsdale route between New Cumnock and Annan, leaving a few passing loops. The Channel Tunnel will require double track over the whole route. There is, however, the possibility of a reopened station at New Cumnock. The Ayrshire electrification is well ahead of schedule. Driver training on 318s begins late April with interim passenger workings beginning on 29th September 1986.

There is a demand for more trains to run through Carlisle to Newcastle and Leeds.

Graham Lund

SOUTH WEST

By the time this edition is printed, it is hoped that a meeting will have been arranged for the RDS members in Devon and Cornwall.

Mr Burgess of Exmouth has supplied me with interesting news. At a meeting of Transport 2000, Mr John Heaton, BR Area Manager, Exeter, mentioned the possibility of new stations at Exminster and Sowton. He also said that when the East Coast electrification is completed, the HST (125s) will be transferred to the Exeter Waterloo Line.

Joan M.Fuller

NEW RAILGUIDES

Four new titles in this quality series are published this Spring. Whether tourist or local, enthusiast or student - or simply an armchair traveller - all have something of interest to you. Buying one, or all four, is also a way of supporting the RDS with much needed cash.

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SEVERNSIDE

Have you checked your "Rail Replacement" timetables recently? Are these County Council-subsidized buses bringing country folk to the stations and taking them home again after a train journey? It would seem that neither BR, the numerous bus companies nor the County Council Transport Team compare the schedules to check coordination. In an eight-sheet submission to Gloucestershire County Council attention has been drawn to continuing non coordination giving specific examples.

Whilst discussions continue between County officials and BR neither will provide £180,000 for a replacement halt at Ashchurch. The train service that BR seem able to offer is very different from that desired by people attending a public meeting on 22nd January.

The Cardiff - Gloucester express trains are being rerouted from May through the Severn Tunnel to call at Bristol Parkway; consequently a renewed effort has been made to interest County officials in reopening Newnham on Severn station. It has been pointed out that the reduced use of the route would enable Newport - Gloucester trains to stop at a restored "Down" platform by normal use of present emergency crossover points and bidirectional operation. This method already applies at Bromsgrove and could also apply at Yate and Wellington (Somerset) to avoid the cost of renewal of footbridge and second platform.

Two-way working at the remaining "Up" platform will suffice for reopening Chip-ping Sodbury, which like Yate can become a bus interchange point. Avon County have declined to reply to previous correspondence, but a further three-page submission includes a repeated request for North Filton and its train services to be advertised and also a request for consideration that Gloucester - Bristol DMUs should reverse there to serve nearby colleges and factories bordering Filton Airfield.

The promised improved service due May 1986 between Swindon and Westbury has prompted a request to BR to extend one of these trains to Mells Road and Radstock in the evening and to utilize a freight local trip to convey a carriage to Radstock for a morning passenger service to Westbury in time for long distance connections.

Somerset County Council is showing interest in Somerton, whereas previously it considered that a bus service to Taunton would suffice. We have asked for consideration of nearby Langport and Wellington, which together with already reopened Melksham could be served by Swindon to Westbury services running through to Exmouth or

Paignton. Some HST services could probably also call at Wellington to permit commuting to Exeter as well as to Taunton and help to alleviate the car parking problems and congestion in Exeter.

Cooperation between Avon and Gloucestershire County Councils has been sought with a view to restoration of two platforms at Charfield (Avon); where much of the catchment area is in Gloucestershire. If the two loops at Charfield were designated for passenger train use, the DMUs working an improved Gloucester - Bristol service could be overtaken by High Speed Trains. As an Avon-sponsored Refuse Container Train service is now in operation to Calvert, we hope that they will give attention to the lowcost proposals for passenger facilities which have been awaiting their attention for years.

Eric Barbery

WEST MIDLANDS

The Branch held a successful A.G.M. in Birmingham on 8th February when 34 members attended and enjoyed a quiz on rail topics and a series of colour slides on rail scenes at home and abroad. The existing Committee were re-elected with two new members, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Wiggell.

Frank Hastilow was interviewed for 30 minutes on BBC Radio West Midlands on 29th January when rail development was discussed and a good 'commercial' given for the book 'Midlands by Rail'. The branch is to pursue attendance with stand and sales/leaflets at various exhibitions, meetings and rail days in the Midlands during the forthcoming months.

An interesting comparison of local passenger counts at the top ten West Midlands stations now shows the recently-built University station with NO Car Park as third.

Passengers Joining at stations per week:-

1983/4		1984/5	
1. New Street	110,741	1. New Street	123,547
2. Moor Street	31,208	2. Moor Street	33,705
3. Five Ways	11,971	3. University	13,431
4. Sutton Coldfield	11,481	4. Stourbridge Junction	11,684
5. Stourbridge Junction	11,007	5. Five Ways	11,664
6. Kings Norton	10,011	6. Sutton Coldfield	11,287
7. University	9,792	7. Kings Norton	10,276
8. Longbridge	9,446	8. Walsall	10,183
9. Walsall	9,084	9. Longbridge	10,159
10. Four Oaks	8,972	10. Four Oaks	9,274

Alan Bevan

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Circulation Manager: This post is vacant. Any prospective volunteers for this post should contact K. Willson at the above address.

Mr. Cooper is responsible for REGIONAL NOTES, Mr. Willson for all other material. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in JUNE) all material must be in the hands of the appropriate Editor by WEDNESDAY 23rd April.

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ICKNIELD

The "Slough Leader" newspaper reported that the Labour Party in Slough had proposed a link between Slough and Bracknell to improve railway services in Berkshire. This addition to the Berkshire Structure Plan has been scoffed at by the Tory and Alliance parties. In calling the plan a "high risk strategy" Tory leaders have demonstrated that enterprise and risk taking are not for them. Being wrong is not the prerogative of Westminster. With more land in Berkshire being devoted to houses it is imperative that the railways should be built first.

Work on the new station at Winnersh Triangle is making good progress. To promote its opening the Branch intends to run a railtour on 3rd May to Spalding and Lincoln for the Flower Festival via Earley, Tilehurst, Didcot, Oxford, Winslow and Bedford. Telephone 02358 16547 for details or write to 10 Sandringham Road, Didcot, Oxon enclosing an SAE.

Lyndon E

IN PARLIAMENT

No. 26

MARCH 1986

PREVIEW

NOTHING CAN STOP CHUNNEL ONCE IT STARTS

Tony Speller (C. North Devon) says the Chunnel will be a boost for British Rail like the boost that North Sea Oil gave to the country. Could any change of government stop it? "NO", he says. Because private capital is being used, no change of government would make any difference. Cancellation would cost too much in compensation. Unfortunately some Labour members thought nothing existed outside England.

Will the Chunnel boost electrification? "Certainly." We are now getting electricity from France, he says, more cheaply than we can generate it ourselves. "It's cheaper than diesel oil."

When we are linked with the SNCF (French Railways) we can learn from the French. "But we must take advantage of the Chunnel by spending on our railways." Mr. Speller says that when travelling on Western Region to his Devon constituency he is ashamed to hear other passengers grumbling at breakdowns as they do, because the railways are stunted of capital. Rolling stock is tatty.

"I expect to see the tunnel started within 12 months," he says. "It will be superb for BR."

'FERRY GAUGE' SHOULD GO AS FAR AS ASHFORD

Nigel Spearing (Lab. Newham South) says he is not convinced that the Channel Tunnel should take priority over expenditure on other projects. It would benefit France more than Britain. At the time of speaking he was not sure what attitude other Opposition members would take. But the Chunnel would certainly boost electrification - "Clapham Junction to Willesden for a start." The French would want to use the train à grande vitesse (TGV).

He thought "ferry gauge" - assuming loading gauge through the tunnel will be even wider than "Berne gauge" - should be continued at least to Ashford, to keep the loading point well away from the Kent coast. Berne gauge should

be taken at least to London. The old Western and Great Central lines lent themselves to wider gauge, and Mr. Spearing pointed out that at the turn of the century these two lines and the Channel Tunnel had the same chairman, so they looked ahead in those days!

Speaking before the debate on the Docklands Extension Bill, he said he deplored the way the purpose of the Docklands Light Railway had been changed. Instead of being public transport for the community, to stimulate regeneration, it was to be funded by giant new projects like the one planned at Canary Wharf.

'MRS T WOULD GROW MORE EAGER FOR THE PROJECT'

Lord Jenkins (of Putney) speaking before Mrs. Thatcher's second meeting with Pres. Mitterand in February, said he thought her present difficulties would make her all the more eager to push the Chunnel project through. "To withdraw would look like another failure."

There was little enthusiasm for it in the Labour Party. He was not keen on the idea himself - he had a sister in Thanet where people feared loss of employment on the ferries - but he was glad a rail tunnel had been decided on and not a bridge.

The fact that freight would enter the country on rails was a point in the tunnel's favour. "I support rail against road," he said, "but since Monty died" (our late President - Mr. Banks) "I've become a passenger in the movement." JE

Services declining says Bradford MP

NOVEMBER 26 Max Madden (Lab. Bradford West) expressed "mounting concern" about Bradford's rail services when opening a debate on the motion for the adjournment. Only half the families in the district owned a car, he said. Bradford should have one of the best rail services in Britain, but was condemned to having one of the worst.

It would be ludicrous for the line to Leeds not to be electrified when that from Leeds to the east coast main line was being electrified. A joint report by Bradford City Council and BR said that 10 years ago there were five through trains from Bradford to London and six the opposite way. Now there were only three each way, all via Leeds.

Service "worse in 1985 than it was in 1965"

"It is unfortunate, said the report, that the inter city service to London is worse in 1985 than it was in 1965." There were also complaints from the Post Office. Declining rail service had had spin-off effects on other services. "The usual spiral of deteriorating services, leading to fewer passengers, trains being axed and lines closed, must not be allowed." There was also mounting concern about services to Keighley and Ilkley, a genuinely based anxiety.

"Ministers visit Bradford fairly frequently, but not many travel by train, and few experience the overcrowded, uncomfortable and inconvenient arrangements suffered by most passengers on trains from Leeds to Bradford. I urge the Under-Secretary to come and meet the city council and discuss proposals for ensuring that the Leeds - Bradford line is electrified."

'Prestige train attracts 1st class passengers'

Mr. Spicer replied that the quality and level of services on particular routes were matters for the Railways Board. The Government had set guiding objectives and a number of business targets. There was no justification for subsidising inter-urban transport.

On December 30 BR was to withdraw a weekly evening train to London and terminate at Leeds one of the evening trains from London. He believed these changes were because of light passenger loadings between Bradford and Leeds.

"It is not for me to second-guess the BR Board's decisions. However, it is providing connecting services to Bradford for passengers arriving at Leeds, and a service from Bradford to Doncaster to connect with the Edinburgh to London services. "There is some good

COMMONS DEBATES in the selected extracts from parliamentary speeches and answers to questions, which follow this PREVIEW, Commons replies are given by Transport Secretary, Nicholas Ridley, or his Minister of State, David Mitchell, or Under-Secretary of State, Michael Spicer.

C = Conservative, Lab. = Labour, L/A = Liberal Alliance.

news for Bradford inter-city passengers. First in prestige "Yorkshire Pullman" which starts from Leeds in the morning and runs through to Bradford in the evening. As a result first-class business travel to Yorkshire has increased significantly. It should be beneficial to the economy of Bradford.

"Through trains from Bradford to London take 176 minutes for the 195 miles - an average speed of 66mph. The Pullman back in the evening is even quicker. Some journeys requiring a change at Leeds can also be done in under three hours. This is much faster than by car.

"Secondly, Bradford passengers should benefit from electrification of the east coast main line, which will be completed to Leeds in 1989. With electrification, BR has no plans to withdraw through services to Bradford, as some had feared. These services will be provided with the very latest rolling stock. Locomotives will be changed at Leeds."

BR turned down case for electrification

BR considered the case for electrifying, in 1982, the line between Bradford and Leeds, but found it could not justify spending only £2 to £3 million, against an estimated cost of £10 million. It had been suggested that appraisals of such electrification schemes should not be determined solely on a commercial basis. "Our position, however, is to believe firmly that BR's inter-city sector, where the responsibility would fall, should operate and invest efficiently.

Mr. Madden intervened to ask if there was not a case for making investment funds available through the regional assistance programmes operated by the Department of Trade and Industry.

Mr. Spicer said the issue of seeking a European regional development fund grant had also been raised in connection with Bradford electrification, but it was for BR to decide whether to prepare and submit an application for a European fund grant through the Government.

Extension of Docklands line to the Bank

NOVEMBER 27 Mr. Ridley, asked by Neil Thorne (C. Ilford South) if there were plans to extend the docklands light railway, replied, "London Regional Transport has today with my consent presented a Bill to provide powers to extend to the City the docklands light railway. This would link the railway to Bank underground station."

He added that he had been considering ways to involve the private sector in the line's ownership and operation. The consortium that planned to develop Canary Wharf on the Isle of Dogs had told him that he would contribute £30 million towards the extension and to

secure underwriting of an agreed privatisation scheme. There would be opportunity for other people to put forward alternative proposals.

JANUARY 13 Nigel Spearing (Lab. Newham South) asked the minister to confirm that the westward extension of the Docklands railway would go ahead only if the Canary Wharf project went ahead first.

Mr. Ridley said yes.

Robert Adley (C. Christchurch) asked when the STOL airport, of which the docklands line would be a feature, would take effect.

Mr. Ridley replied that there were no proposals for the extension to STOLport from the central station, now being constructed. The date for it was a matter for the Minister for the Environment. "I believe it will go ahead."

Mr. Spearing asked whether, if the extension was built, about nine-tenths would have been provided with public money. Would the minister not require private operators to fit in with the system of travel cards and fare levels arranged by LRT?

Mr. Mitchell replied that the railway was not expected to make a profit; it was not a case of public investment designed to create private profit.

Enquiry would put full stop to Chunnel project

DECEMBER 9 Mr. Ridley, opening a debate on the fixed link, said many people felt that a Channel Link was exactly the project to stimulate economic activity and improve the flow of people and goods.

Mr. Kinnock had said he was in favour but thought there should be a public enquiry. "That would bring any chance of the link coming into effect to a full stop. The timetable set out last spring is still on course. We intend that the decision, if positive, would be signed before the end of February. The hybrid bill would be introduced during March."

Stephen Ross (L/A, Isle of Wight) said he supported the fixed Channel link. "Where is the spirit of Brunel?" A permanent thoroughfare between our islands and Europe was in the best economic interests of our country - Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales, even the Isle of Wight. Lorries now poured down from all parts of the country down the route to Dover. We had an opportunity to put that traffic on rail.

Mr. Ross said he was a member of the Select Committee on Transport, and there was a seven to four split in favour of the Channel Tunnel Company's scheme. A drive-through tunnel had much to recommend it if it was technically feasible, but a 31-mile long road tunnel would be at least double the length of any similar existing tunnel.

"The link should offer a great opportunity to our much-maligned railway industry. I hope we receive firm assurances that no scheme will be approved unless it provides at the outset for a through rail opening of the roadway. Euroroute did not originally make such a promise, although it has changed its ground." BR designers, he added, must be able to match the French all the way, or we might face another takeover bid. "We must get our fair share of what is on offer and not hand it on a plate to the French."

Bruce Millan (Lab. Govan) said that if the project went ahead it would widen the north-south divide. It would not be welcomed in Scotland and the north. It would do economic damage to the most vulnerable areas.

David Crouch (C. Canterbury) said he was speaking about an overall advantage for Britain, not whether the project was more beneficial for one part than another. "About 80% of my constituents are wholly opposed to the fixed link, although I represent Canterbury and east Kent, I am concerned about the good of the whole. He rested his position on advice given in 1774 by Edmund Burke, 'the greatest of all advisers.' Having 64% of our overseas trade with the continent, we must have a much better line of communication than by relying on an uncertain sea passage.

Jonathan Aitken (C. Thanet South) said there would be a short-term boom in contracts for construction companies and glittering prizes for those who won the competition. But the fixed link would have enormous and unforeseen consequences for our future destiny and way of life.

Mrs. Gwyneth Dunwoody (Lab. Crewe and Nantwich) said she agreed with Ron Lewis (Lab. Carlisle), a member of the select committee on transport, who strongly favoured a rail tunnel.

Robert Adley (C. Christchurch) said he was founder and first chairman of the Brunel Society. He did not think there was a case for a public enquiry; a political decision had to be taken.

"I have always remembered the sad and wistful expression on the face of the late Anthony Crosland when, in 1975, he was forced to cancel the previous project." It was the most tragic irony to hear Opposition MPs say that we must try to limit regional damage. The relationship between the percentage of traffic on the road and that on rail in the proposed schemes would determine the amount of environmental damage that would be done. The more traffic that went on the railway and the further away from Kent it was loaded, the less would be the environmental damage.

"Studying the four proposals, it seems that the higher the cost of the project, the greater will be the traffic generation necessary to make it pay,

and the greater the impact on the ferries. Had we gone ahead with the previous project, we might not have had to waste time discussing Stansted and all the problems that has entailed. A fixed link would do a great deal to reduce pressure on our airports."

Mr. Adley said: "We are all entitled to know where the Labour Party stands. I hope Labour members will at least feel able to say that this major project is in our national interest and that despite reservations they would support it."

Donald Anderson (Lab. Swansea East) said Mr. Adley had made a powerful case that the greater the rail component the fewer would be the adverse consequences on the regions. "I am in favour of a fixed link. The quicker we can be seen symbolically and actually to link ourselves to the continent the better."

Tam Dalyell (Lab. Linlithgow) said that as a Scot he was in favour of rail. "I am completely in favour of a rail link, but I am against a road link."

French accord: statement read in both Houses

JANUARY 20 A statement was made by **Mr. Ridley** in the Commons, and the **Earl of Caithness** in the Lords, that the Prime Minister and the President of France had decided earlier that day that their two governments would facilitate the construction of a fixed link across the Channel by Channel Tunnel Group. A White Paper giving reasons for the decision, charting the next steps, would be published as soon as possible.

"The two governments were faced with four proposals of outstanding quality." The technical risks of Eurobridge made it too speculative. The choice between CTG, Channel Expressway and Euro-route was more difficult. But both the last two had large technical risks. CTG was a well-developed project, less risky and less expensive and was least vulnerable to terrorist attack. Environmental impact could be reduced to an acceptable level. Legislation would be introduced as soon as possible and construction could begin by the summer of 1987.

"We have secured an undertaking from the CTG that it will be put forward by the year 2000 a proposal for a drive-through link, to be undertaken as soon as technical feasibility is assured."

Stephen Ross (L/A, IoW) said he was grateful that the CTG project was chosen and not one of the others. Only if BR had adequate capital resources to make full use of the whole network could the environmental damage be adequately reduced.

Peter Rees (C. Dover) said there was deep concern in east Kent about the implications of the link and a need for close consultations with local interests.

Donald Stewart (Scottish Nationalist, Western Isles) said the project was the biggest election bribe in history.

Mr. Ridley replied that the link would greatly benefit constituents throughout the country, including Scotland.

David Howell (C. Guildford) said the Government had made by far the best choice in choosing the CTG scheme.

Sir Julian Ridsdale (C. Harwich) said that optimism about the future of the ferries was not shared by some of the ferry operators.

Mr. Ridley replied that it would be seven or eight years before any link could be opened, in which time a massive growth was expected in traffic to the continent, resulting in extra business for the ferries.

Roland Boyes (Lab. Houghton and Washington) said: "I and the majority of my constituents completely oppose the building of the fixed link. We live in an area of high unemployment and this will increase unemployment here." Why did the government encourage expenditure on a hole in the ground?

Mr. Ridley replied that this was not government cash but international capital. Far better that capital should be used to build a Channel link than to build factories on the continent, which might make the competitiveness of the MP's constituents even worse.

John Cartwright (SDP/A Woolwich) said that given the interest in a drive-through tunnel, the year 2000 seemed a long way off. How firmly were the French committed?

Mr. Ridley said both governments would have liked to see a drive-through link, but the strata were unknown of a 5- or 6-kilometre stretch near the French coast. The CTG's undertaking would be spelt out in the White Paper.

'Game, Set and Match to the French'

Jonathan Aitkin (C. Thanet South) said many members saw the project as resulting in game, set and match to the French. The Bill now faced a grim uphill struggle through the House.

Mr. Ridley replied that there was a good deal of argument with the French; the CTG scheme was our preferred objective.

James Lamond (Lab. Oldham Central & Royston) asked whether, as the project was taken over by private capital, had not a considerable sum been freed to finance projects like the through Manchester rail link or the retention of the Oldham - Rochdale rail link.

Mr. Ridley said Mr. Lamond did not understand the difference between Government money and other people's money.

Teddy Taylor (C. Southend East) said that the only comparable tunnel in the world, just completed in Japan, had been a total financial disaster.

Mr. Ridley replied that the tunnel to the north island off the coast of Japan was where few people lived, but many lived on the continent of Europe.

More investment in BR would benefit nation

Robert Adley (C. Christchurch) said the project offered the greatest possible benefit to the regions of any of the proposed schemes. Would the minister give maximum time to the proposition that the more investment BR put into its regional facilities, the more it would benefit the nation?

Mr. Ridley said the Government's attitude to railway investment was not to stint it, provided that it was commercial.

John Marek (Lab. Wrexham) said many believed that the minister had made the right decision but were apprehensive that the eventual benefits would not find their way to Wales, Scotland and the North.

Mr. Ridley replied that there was nothing to stop trains travelling to the link from all parts of the country. Connections could be made where they did not now exist.

Snape voted against former cancellation

Peter Hardy (Lab. Wentworth) said the project would go down well in Rotherham, where works producing goods for the railway and ring road had been planned for closure, and in railway workshops, where thousands of jobs had been lost.

Peter Snape (Lab. West Bromwich East) asked about the effect on the expected closure of Swindon railway works. Would BR's external financing limit be allowed to put any constraint on BR's investment in the Channel project?

He urged the minister to keep Cheriton terminal as small as possible, to reduce the environmental impact. Would he also tell the chairman of CTG that the recruitment of non-union labour was no guarantee of industrial peace? "I have always supported the idea and voted against the previous Labour Government's cancellation of the project in 1975."

Mr. Ridley said the bulk of the investment by BR would take place in about 1989, 90 and 91; it was already approved in principle. Swindon and Glasgow workshops were maintenance establishments, not relevant to the new type of build that would be needed. Everything possible would be done to contain the effects of the terminal at Cheriton.

HOUSE OF LORDS

(Replies given by Parliamentary Secretary to the Department of Transport, the Earl of Caithness)

DECEMBER 5 Lord Ferrier (C. who is from East Lothian) asked whether an increasing number of people were not distressed at the prospect of a Channel fixed link.

The Earl of Caithness replied: "Yes, I think there is also an increasing number who are for a link. Scotland has a lot to gain from it."

Lord Underhill (Lab.) said it was highly desirable for the House to debate the principle of the link.

Baroness Burton (Lab.) said she hoped the Prime Minister and President Mitterand would decide to go ahead early next year.

Lord Gisborough (C.) said that if there were a public enquiry into this matter, it would drag on for years and years, cost the country an enormous amount of money, destroy a great many potential exports, and do nothing but total harm.

DECEMBER 13 (The debate continued)

The Government are concerned that the Channel link should not decimate the existing ferry fleets, said the Earl of Caithness, when he proposed that the House take note of the proposals to build the link.

"We recognise the importance of the ferries as a source of employment: but we are also conscious of the important role of the ferries in national defence. We want to ensure that the link would increase and not reduce competition for cross-Channel travel.

The project was unique in having to be facilitated by two sovereign states, England and France. Our two national systems were very different and the French had a much more abbreviated system than our own. "It would simply not be possible to fit a public local enquiry into the timetable for such a bi-national decision."

Lord Mellish (Lab.) said he supported the project, but was it not odd that others who supported it also demanded a public enquiry? Those who insisted on a public enquiry were usually the ones who opposed the project.

Lord Caithness replied that this highlighted some of the curiosities of the British character. Let it not be forgotten that the Labour Party made it clear in 1974 when they introduced the Channel Tunnel Bill that there would not be a public enquiry then.

Lord McNair (L/A) recalled that Mr. Ross (the IoW MP) had asked what had

happened to the spirit of Brunel. "We have long been in favour of a Channel tunnel, and we do mean a tunnel. We do not want any fancy constructions sticking up above sea level, no matter how clever they are, interfering with the already congested sea lanes."

He also agreed with Lord Underhill that if the project was to be of use and profit to the country as a whole, not just the south east, goods should be put on a train in Glasgow, for example, and unloaded in Milan.

"I should be happiest with the rail-only tunnel, because, provided that BR was given the necessary support (which is most important), it would help in the vital task of transferring freight from roads to railways. The good people of Kent would be pleased to see the last of juggernauts, making what was the Garden of England into hell on earth.

Lord Soames (C.) said that if there were no fixed link lorries would still go through Kent, whether to Dover to go on a ferry or to go across on a fixed link. "I understand the fear that there will be so much traffic going to the Continent that all methods of transport will be used: road, rail, air and sea. These fears are much exaggerated." It was blatantly obvious that there was not time for a public enquiry. A road and rail link would offer greater choice.

Britain disadvantaged without the link

Lord Beloff (C) said this country suffered from the natural difficulty of being separated from the continent by a stretch of extremely rough water. Our diplomats and business men, going to Brussels or Paris, started with the disadvantage of having a longer, more uncomfortable journey than their counterparts from other European capitals. Anyone who put obstructions in the Channel, in the form of piers of a bridge or ventilation shafts, was venturing against the forces of nature in a big way.

Lord Carmichael of Kelvingrove (Lab. the former Glasgow MP) said that at the present stage of the art the tunnel was the right way. "It must be a rail tunnel, because, if there is going to be any hope for other parts of the country, we need rail access right down to the south coast and through to the continent."

The Earl of Caithness, replying, said he believed that any link, if there was a link, would bring tremendous opportunities and prosperity to this country. All the arguments he had heard would be fully reflected in the assessment.

Lord Soames (C.) said his view was that so much traffic would be going to the continent that all four methods of transport would be well used: road, rail, air and sea. "Anything that speeds up the flow of trade and people between our partners and ourselves must be in the national interest."

Viscount Hanworth (L/A) said he was strongly in favour of a rail link but not a road link. Inevitable pile-ups would mean a reduction in the maximum speed limit to, at the very best, 40 mph. That implied three quarters of an hour of tunnel driving. There would be breakdowns in places and journey times could not be assumed to be less than one hour in tunnel. There could be a fireball going down the tunnel and a high concentration of carbon monoxide.

"The public become unreasonably emotional when taking even remote risks. The consequence would be that few people would use the tunnel. It could easily become a white elephant, with large overheads."

Lord Mountbatten (Independent) said he was in favour of a tunnel dedicated to a rail link. The BR network was under-utilised, which could not be said of the road network. Rail had an in-built ability to move block loads.

Dab of cream on top of cake

JANUARY 20 — on announcement of decision on Fixed Channel Link.

Lord Tordoff (L/A) said the Alliance believed that a link of this sort was important to the future of this country. Emotionally people would want to drive through to France: that would be a nice dab of cream on top of the cake at some stage. Presumably there had to be some nod to the Prime Minister's susceptibilities, and this seemed to be the way out.

"The Government must give some assurances that BR will be allowed to generate the necessary finance to make the scheme viable. When we were talking about Stansted, it seemed that there were two separate compartments: one for the expansion of Stansted, and one for the expansion of BR, which must depend on market forces. I hope if there is need for BR to be given some support, The Government will be prepared to."

The Earl of Caithness said expenditure would have to be accommodated within the external financial limits. The project had not been dealt with in undue haste; there had been two false starts, so it might be a case of third time lucky.

The Bishop of Rochester (Rt. Rev. David Say) said he welcomed the announcement, but there were considerable anxieties about the environment. Would there be access points well away from Kent, because the last thing we wanted was a greater concentration of traffic around Cheriton.

The Earl of Caithness replied that there would certainly be an access point in London, which was fairly well outside Kent. The White Paper would give more details.