

Richard Pullen

By Michael Caton

We are very sorry to report the death of our respected member Richard Pullen, pictured right.

Richard came to England from South Africa and joined the committee of the Railway Inigationation Society, one of the predecessors of Railfuture, in the early 1960s.

Richard Grenville Pullen was one of a small group of people who foresaw the social consequences of the Beeching closures and fought long and hard to retain those rail links which were so important to the communities they served.

During the height of the closure process he moved to Tiverton in Devon where he met his wife-to-be Audrey.

He became the society's first regional representative, preparing cases for retention of many of the services in the South West and appearing at the closure hearings held by the Transport Users Consultative Committee.

Later he was appointed assistant town clerk at Ashford, Kent, where he played a prominent role in the successful campaign to retain the Ashford to Hastings line. He then emigrated to New Zealand from



where he continued to retain an active interest in the affairs of Railfuture.

He was the society's legal adviser for many years and his wise counsel was of great value, not only in the early days but recently when he transmitted opinions on legal matters from the other side of the world.

Richard's knowledge and sound advice were of great value and he was a pleasure to work with. We extend our sympathy to his widow and two grown-up children Ruth and Philip.

LOCAL ACTION

East Midlands

By Anthony Kay
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■ ■ New chairman

A vote of thanks was given at the branch AGM to Roger Skilton, who has served the East Midlands branch for many years as chairman and previously secretary. He is moving away from the region. The new chairman is Terry Holt. Other officers are: Graham Nalty, vice-chairman; Roger Bacon, secretary; Chris Precey, treasurer; Bob Newitt, membership secretary.

■ ■ East Midlands Parkway

Network Rail approved a £24million funding package for this new station, near where the A453 crosses the Midland main line near Ratcliffe on Soar power station. Building work is expected to start by July 2007, with an estimated completion date of December 2008. There will be a car park with at least 500 spaces, and a bus shuttle to East Midlands Airport.

■ ■ Loughborough station

Work is due to start this summer on a new footbridge with lifts, funded through the Department for Transport Access for All scheme. This will be a great help to disabled people and anyone with heavy luggage. However, there is a great deal more work needed to bring the East Midlands' fourth busiest station up to standard, and the newly formed Loughborough Station Users' Group will be campaigning for further improvements.

Network Rail is considering extending platform 3, which is only used by trains stopping at intermediate stations to Leicester. A longer platform would make this available to longer-distance services when trains are diverted on to the slow lines by engineering works, and it is planned to increase line speeds on the slow lines between Leicester and Trent Junction. Network Rail is also looking into extending main line platforms 1 and 2, with platform 2 possibly being extended to eight or 10-coach length. Currently, some Meridian trains only have one door into a standard class carriage available when they call at Loughborough.

Network Rail is also drawing up plans to increase car park capacity from 120 to 300 spaces and improve the bus interchange. The scheme will be funded and built by Network Rail, but the design will have to be agreed by the new East Midlands franchise holder.

■ ■ School run on rail

Loughborough's other station, on the Great Central Railway, may soon be making a new contribution to local transport. The station is quite close to Loughborough Endowed Schools, which take pupils from a wide catchment area and so make a major contribution to school-run congestion. The heritage railway's other stations, at Quorn, Rothley and Birstall (close to Leicester's ring road), are within easy reach of many pupils' homes. Meetings are to take place between the schools and the GCR to discuss running a daily service to take pupils to and from school.

A Parry People Mover was trialled on the GCR in 2004, and was very popular but was not considered financially viable. Its capacity was also too limited.

Anti-rail thoughts of Arnie

California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger wants to slash the rail budget next year to just £600,000 million – down more than £6.5million from this year's level. But rail campaigners are calling for £20billion to be invested in a 700-mile high-speed rail network for California. For more terrifying details about Arnold Schwarzenegger, who wants to be the next US president, see <http://arnoldexposed.com/>



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