



# Railway Development NEWS

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members

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## In this issue

### **This is the age of the train**

- Nothing for Chunnel, but £200m for M40! ... page 2
- Branch line closures: RDS is vindicated ... page 3
- £70m operating profit for British Rail ... page 6
- Freight - BL and Ford turn to Rail ... page 8
- Tax relief on fares recommended ... page 10
- Woodhead route must be kept, says RDS ... page 12
- Airport-Rail "Hover" link approved ... page 14
- Merseyside rail traffic increasing ... page 17
- Start made on Milton Keynes station ... page 18
- Your letters in *Members' Platform* ... page 19

**June 1980**



# No more rail closures

In his address to the A.G.M. in Bristol on 26th April the Chairman, Mr Banks, reminded members that the Government had come to power on the eve of our 1979 meeting. So far the new Minister of Transport had denied any threat of "substantial" rail closures. What was "substantial" was open to doubt but the Society's policy was beyond doubt and we would fight even one closure. B.R. needed development not contraction.

Were, however, the secondary lines safe for the future in the light of the Government's cuts in public expenditure and the fact that most of the rolling stock was very old and due for the scrap heap? The answer appeared to be NO. For, whilst the total budget for transport was being cut by £163m, the sum allocated for new roads and maintenance had been increased by £11m. So where was the money coming from for the new rolling stock? Would the secondary services literally die of old age? It was our job to see that this did not happen.

A Study carried out by B.R. and Leeds University indicated that railway investment in Britain is lower than that for any other country of the EEC and this was clearly the basic reason for the shortcomings of our railways. The spending of £200m. on a new M40, running as it would parallel with the underutilised Birmingham - Southampton railway was a disgrace, particularly as the oil may have run out by the time it is finished. Was the timing of its announcement, on the eve of Good Friday, done for a purpose?

£200m. could be better spent on building a Channel Tunnel which would bring untold benefit to British Rail and to the national economy. For if the French paid half of the cost we could have a tunnel for the cost of two M40s, or of one Jumbo Jet a year for seven years and even this would be less than the £1,000 million written off for the development of "Concorde"! A Tunnel would not only provide an all-weather link with France but would help to reduce the amount of "Juggernaut" traffic, particularly through the South East.

Turning to another Tunnel he referred to the threatened closure of the electrified Woodhead route across the Pennines where the Society and B.R. were poles apart. Destruction of this valuable asset, like the secondary services, must not be allowed but without a statutory procedure for freight-only lines objectors must insist that some form of public inquiry is held in this case.

After referring to the two books which the Society has produced on the rural services (See p.3) he mentioned the National Conference of Rail Users' Groups held in March of this year (See p.5) and finally urged the people of Bristol to press on and build their proposed "Metro". RVP/JKB

## BRANCH LINE CLOSURES - THE SOCIETY VINDICATED

Despite the assurance by the Minister, reported in our last issue, that there would be no "substantial" cuts in the rail network, B.R. is still expected to go ahead with talks with the Government, during the Summer, into the limited replacement of some underutilised rail services by buses. Whilst these proposals are likely to be less extensive than the 41 services over 900 miles, denied last year, they are expected to cover a dozen or so little used branch lines in the West Country, East Anglia and the North but not such substantial cross-country lines as Norwich - Birmingham, the Central Wales line or those north of Inverness.

One reason why the West Country has been singled out could be the present impasse between the China Clay Industry and B.R. over who should pay for the new modern wagons which both agree are urgently needed if the service is to be run efficiently. Nevertheless as the China Clay producers already have their own extensive road haulage undertaking to fall back on the only people who are likely to suffer are those hundreds of road side dwellers who would have to put up with the extra lorries thundering by, but more particularly those rail users whose passenger services would have to bear the full cost of keeping them open once the china clay traffic had gone.

In the light of B.R.'s current financial position (see p.6) arising from the Government's squeeze on expenditure and the recent wage settlement they will undoubtedly seek to contain subsidies as the value of P.S.O. Grant rapidly decreases, both in amount and in real terms, and seek to concentrate investment on profitable flows of freight, inter-city passenger and the South East commuter services - the latter, no doubt to placate the Monopolies Comm.

Whilst some concessions are likely to be made by the consideration of low-cost innovations on rural lines which are to be kept open, such as cheaper level crossings and radio control in place of signalling, up to now strongly opposed by management and unions, further rail closures of the kind contemplated would represent the economics of the madhouse for as we have seen in the Society's publication "Can Bus Replace Train?" buses can never be a substitute. Whether they carry a B.R., N.B.C. or other symbol they are going to be just as prone to accidents and delays as any other road vehicle, yet as our later work "Your Local Trains in the 80s?" has shown, unless the investment is forthcoming now some of the services will have to be abandoned as the rolling stock expires of old age.

\* Copies available from RDS Sales, Latymer, The Drive, Belmont, Surrey, SM2 7DJ 40p. & 64p. resp. incl. postage.



Not only have the C.T.C.G. rejected the bus/rail replacement idea (see previous issue p.4) but a recent report @ by the Policy Studies Institute, edited by Mayer Hillman and Anne Whalley, has now proved conclusively that, in the words of an article in the "Sunday Times" - "the scars on local communities" from the Beeching closures "have been far deeper than official predictions had allowed" and its author, Gareth Huw Davies, summed up the position as follows:-

"It now seems that all those anti-Beeching protesters whose voices were heard at hundreds of public inquiries up and down the country, were absolutely right. Local railway closures have indeed led to considerable inconvenience and even hardship in rural communities."

"We told you so" is the only reasonable response which the Society can evoke for both R.I.S. and R.D.A. have been saying this for more years than can be remembered and most of the conclusions of the report @ (e.g. that country dwellers have responded in the only way possible i.e. by buying more cars or travelling less) have all been revealed in past surveys. Not only that but the report confirms our own conclusions that in their final years many of the services were used by at least 50% of the local community, and that many a reluctant motorist would prefer to go by train if there were still one to travel on.

Further comment is therefore superfluous because we have said it all before at one time or another - the evidence is all there in the archives of the Society's constituent bodies. Only successive Governments seem unable to grasp the reality of the situation and if it is to retain any semblance of credibility the present one is going to have to find a much more convincing argument for cutting further rail services than those hawked around to date!

@ The Social Consequences of Rail Closures. P.S.I., 1-2, Castle Lane, London SW1E 6DR Price: £4.50

## This is the age of the train

This very appropriate slogan has been coined by British Rail for a new and comprehensive advertising campaign to be presented by Mr Jimmy Saville, OBE.  
"Owzabout that then?"

With this issue...

"IN PARLIAMENT" - "MEMBERS HANDBOOK" - "M.O.SUPPLEMENT"

## Users' groups demand government action

The first National Conference of Rail Users Groups organised by the RDS in London on March 29th unanimously passed a Resolution deploring "the failure of successive governments to provide urgently needed investment capital for the re-equipment and development of British Rail's secondary rail services". It went on to urge the Government to provide additional financial support for this purpose over the next five years. Copies of the Resolution have been sent to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Chancellor and the Chairman of British Rail.

RDS Vice-Chairman Dr. M.P.L.Caton, the first speaker at the conference, warned of the danger of "closure by default". The present Transport Minister had been rather more definite than some of his predecessors about promising "no substantial closures". Indeed it would be political suicide in this energy conscious age to propose mass closures. However, we had the problem of a railway system starved of investment in which services could simply die of old age. In these circumstances certain B.R. wangers were suggesting that a policy of closures and bus replacement could be followed in some areas. "We must not let even one closure slip through" insisted Dr Caton. "We must not fall for any compromises. The network has already been pruned to the bone. We must press for a positive investment policy in the secondary services; and the Government must be aware of the growing public opinion about the need to keep and develop our railways."

Over 50 people attended the Conference, representing more than 25 different local Groups from London, East Anglia, Bedfordshire, Warwickshire, Lincolnshire, Yorkshire, Lancashire, Gloucestershire, Devon, Sussex and Kent. Each Group explained its achievements and problems (and it was interesting to see how experiences were often similar in different parts of the country) i.e. problems caused by the Property Board; by lines being in two B.R. divisions; or in two Counties. Questions included:- should Groups pursue individual complaints?, concentrate on general promotion?, criticise B.R. in public?, & tackle vandalism at unmanned stations? For the RDS Mr T.J.Garrod spoke on how the Society could help local users' groups, (pointing out that the RDS had taken the initiative in the formation of several such groups) and was able to help with research, publications, exhibition material, provision of specialist speakers, and many other ways.

A report of the Conference is now being prepared and RDS National Chairman, Mr R.V.Banks together with Dr Caton and E. Anglia Branch Chairman S.F.Wilkinson hope to meet Transport Minister, Norman Fowler early in June to put to him the case for the secondary lines.



## B.R.'s harsh success

In 1979 British Rail made an operational surplus of £70.2m, but interest and other financial charges reduced this to a net loss of £400,000. In his Annual Report, Sir Peter Parker stated that unless investment levels are raised by 30% just to replace worn out assets the consequences would be; lower standards of speed, frequency, comfort and reliability. B.R.B. was pressing the Government for more financial flexibility, but is justly proud that in 1979 the total passenger/miles travelled on B.R. (estimated at 19,990m) exceeded the 1962 pre-Beeching total of 19,772m, despite a subsequent reduction in passenger route miles. However, during 1979 three out of every 10 scheduled passenger trains were cancelled and 13 out of every 100 trains arrived at their destination more than 5 minutes late. These statistics reflected a further deterioration over B.R.'s 1978 performance.

## More investment needed

The Government has accepted B.R.'s claim for passenger support payments of £552,500,000 for 1980. This sum represents £10 a year for each person in Great Britain and is very good value. Revenue from fares in 1980 is expected to be £970m. A study undertaken by Leeds University has revealed that low investment in B.R. is the cause of low freight and passenger traffic and therefore higher charges and fares. The study compared other European railways and found B.R.'s performance was good but confirmed that our rail freight manpower is excessive. B.R. scored in track and stock utilisation. European systems were found to have more taxpayer support, particularly for stock renewal, electrification and new track, which all helped to improve efficiency and the attractiveness of rail. Copies of the Report, at just over £12.00, are available from the B.R.B.

## FARE ATTRACTIONS

The Swedish success story of cutting fares by some 40% and achieving a £12m. increase in revenue, is now fairly well known. Efforts to secure a similar policy in Britain have been refused Government backing. Nevertheless B.R.'s Family Railcard is handsomely succeeding in getting families off the road and onto rail for leisure travel. Of the 60,000 families who have so far invested in the £12 Annual Card, some 28% would not have otherwise made the journey; 24% would have gone by car, and 12% by coach.

## Channel Tunnel

It is now clear that there is considerable support and strong economic reasons for building the £650m. Channel Tunnel. Mr Fowler, Transport Minister, gave an encouraging but non-committal statement on 19th March pending receipt of a study report by Sir Alexander Cairncross in the Summer.

Whilst the BR/SNCF project is for a 31 mile single track tunnel there are thoughts that Sir Alex may advocate a two track tunnel. Despite the Government's unwillingness to provide public funds for up to 40% of the costs, the Chunnel is considered by B.R., S.N.C.F. and the E.E.C. to be a profitable venture which should make 13.4% in its first year. Vast savings in fuel are also expected in cross-channel flights. Mr Roy Jenkins, President of the E.E.C. Commission has given his backing to the Tunnel and the Commissioner for Transport, Mr Richard Burke, has indicated that Common Market funds may be available for up to 20% of the cost.

Mr John Nott, U.K. Trade Secretary, has also made it clear that the decision to expand Stanstead Airport is based on the forecasted opening of the Channel Tunnel relieving short-haul air traffic. B.R.'s discussions with commercial bankers for the majority financial backing has been encouraging. Work on the Tunnel could start in 1981 and the "comparatively simple" task completed in 1988. The 25KV ac electric trains would have driving cabs at each end for push-pull working. A new Chunnel freight transfer centre is planned at Lille and freight trains (now to include Motorail) will have locomotives front and rear. The G.L.C. is looking at B.R.'s preferred West Brompton, London Terminal along with other sites; and journeys of 4½ hours between London and Paris or Brussels are expected.

## *It's the same the whole world over*

"Le train en danger de mort - Sauvons-le!" or "The Low train is in danger of death - lets save it!" was a slogan repeatedly found around the Pyrennes last Summer.

The train in question is a metre gauge 3rd rail electric and runs from La Tour de Carol to Villefranche, thro. an area very popular with tourists close to the Spanish border. The trains are nearly 70 years old and look it. Yet they are very popular especially with the tourists for whom special open carriages are added to the multiple units. A petition was being organised by the local railwaymen, posters were stuck to the trains and station walls with exhibitions and meetings elsewhere. The SNCF admits the need for investment in the much needed rolling stock but says it has not got the money! Now where have we heard that before?



# FREIGHT REPORT

**B.L. Uses B.R.** - In addition to the already well established movement of vehicles and parts for Longbridge, B.R. have secured the movement of trucks, chasis, vans and tractors from its Scottish works at Bathgate, for delivery every weekday to Kings Norton and Harwich. The vehicles are carried on car flats and lowliners for large lorries and B.R. is hoping to further develop the full potential of this traffic in the Speedlink service.

**Any Train Mail ?** - The Post Office has, in recent times been moving away from its traditional use of rail for cross-country hauls of mail and has increasingly turned to air and road instead. Following pressure from its own heavy lorry lobby the Postal organisation is now operating long distance road haulage of the mails between such places as Birmingham and Nottingham or Manchester. Also a network of light aircraft converge on Liverpool at 24.00 every night with First Class mail from Cardiff, Bristol, Birmingham, Norwich and other centres. The G.P.O. has recently criticised B.R.'s erratic mail train running and even some cancellations (notably at Southend) and appears to be unduly anxious to loose its ties with its longstanding, faithful and hardworking rail ally. B.R. is of course well-fitted to carry mail and there are many sites next to stations which can be used to locate sorting and transshipment centres.

We hope the GPO posture is only to secure better rail transits and that B.R. can find ways of improving its mail carrying.

**Heavy Freight** - Freightliner now has two 1,600 ton rail container services. Following the Glasgow - Nottingham facility is the new Swansea/Cardiff - London service and both run with 25 wagons hauled by Class 56 locomotives 5 days a week in each direction.

**New Locomotives** - British Rail is planning a new and more powerful series of diesel freight locomotives. Designated the Class 58 their shape will be rather like a class 20 but longer and with a cab at each end.

**Ford First** - On January 15th the first train ran over the new  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile freight branch to the Ford Motor Co's Bridgend engine plant. A train of VTG wagons brought castings from Dagenham and outward flows will include completed engines for Merseyside and West Germany. The branch has a level crossing controlled by a.h.bs over a trunk road and a new 130' river bridge.

**RAILFREIGHT '79** - British Rail Chief Freight Manager, Henry Sanderson, reported that Railfreight made a loss of £9m. in 1979. One of the principal causes was the £13m. extra costs arising from the chronic shortage of locomotives. This was particularly tragic as there was plenty of freight traffic on offer which will now be very hard to retrieve from road hauliers. Happily the loco maintenance and supply problems have now improved. The big success story is B.R.'s coal movement during 1979. The giant CEBB Ratcliffe power station in Nottinghamshire received 7m. tons of coal by merry-go-round trains at a rate of 25 per day, each week, off-loading 1,100 tons. Mr Sanderson is looking to Speedlink to maintain its success trend; is seeking a continued reduction in the old wagonload system; and urging a fight to obtain more Sec. 8 Grants for new rail freight sidings.

Sadly the recent steel strike has lost B.R. an income of £2m. a week. During 1980 improved manpower efficiency and practises in the railfreight field must be secured to help B.R. maintain a competitive role. B.R. Parcels achieved a small surplus and Red Star service carryings rose by 10% to continue the story of growth in this premium area of business. Freightliner recovered from losses early in the year and produced a final operating surplus of £2m., more than double that of 1978.

## "RAILFREIGHT OR JUGGERNAUT?"

New and hot from the printers is the RDS publication "Railfreight or Juggernaut?" Sixteen pages of views, facts and comments on the issues surrounding the longer distance movement of our goods by road and by rail.

The book is a must for members and all others concerned with this often emotive issue. Get your copy NOW! from RDS Sales (address on p.3) 47p. incl. postage.

**B.R. Hopes for Grain Traffic** - British Rail have announced a bid to attract new grain traffic to rail in conjunction with the private company Traffic Services Ltd., who will operate a fleet of Polybulk wagons which would run within the Speedlink service. The new Grain Trains are due to run between East Anglia and Southern Scotland under the brand name "Grainflow"

**FAKENHAM** - Three months after the original closure deadline freight traffic is still (April) being handled at Fakenham and the RDS has pledged its continued support to the local NUR efforts to keep the line open. The fertilizer traffic, in train ferry wagons from the continent, has now topped 1,000 tonnes since it started last Summer.



## Tax relief on fares

An 80 page report was submitted to M.P.s and Transport Authorities on 6th March by the Westminster Chamber of Commerce who are seeking to reduce the cost of commuter travel by measures including the call for tax relief on fares.

The report entitled "Travelling to Work" was compiled by a Working Party after a survey of some 30,000 commuters in London, Glasgow, Manchester, Cardiff and Birmingham in April and May last year. They found that the average commuter paid £8.57 a week to travel and that fare increases have since brought this up to £10.28. The Report says that the sheer cost of travel has led to individual hardship and to the decline of our inner cities. They find that commuting is essential to the maintenance of industry and commerce in Inner City areas and that the rising cost of commuting is showing up in the increasing difficulties in obtaining staff, particularly younger people starting a career. The Report's main recommendations are:-

- To establish tax allowance for travel expenses up to a top level of £400 per annum where the cost of travel exceeds £100 p.a.
- To establish cheaper fares on all journeys where the destination is reached before 8.0. a.m.
- To introduce transport discount certificates for sale to the public as qualification for season ticket discounts.

The Report also recommends that commuter interests should also be represented on the main and regional boards of B.R. and L.T. In comparison with foreign counterparts the British Commuter is paying more for travel and the RDS shares the hope of the Westminster Chamber of Commerce that the Government will act to improve the commuter's lot.

## HONG KONG SUCCESS

On 14th February, Hong Kong's 9.7 mile underground mass-transit railway (MTR) was opened. It cost \$530m., includes 15 stations, and a 1½ mile submerged tunnel.

Despite the huge cost the MTR is expected to become profitable after 12 years amortisation. British Companies had to take over the rail contracts after the Japanese pulled out, and we completed the job on time and within the budget! G.F.C., Metro-Cammel and Westinghouse are now hoping for contracts to modernise China's railway system.

## SHARES IN B.R.

In line with Government wishes plans are being made to introduce private Capital into B.R.'s non-rail sector. A holding company has been suggested to enable B.R. and private shareholders to have a joint stake in the Hotels, Shipping and Property sectors which made a trading profit in 1978 of £19m.

## EEC MONEY FOR ROADS

Who else but the British Road Federation could have affronted to demand EEC Transport Funds for such new road schemes as the A1-M1 link; the M40; the A44 Bangor - Chester route; the M45 Telford route; and many others amongst a total of 50 European highway projects, suggested by the European Roads Federation as suitable for Common Market finance. Not one scheme improves transport links between member nations of the EEC and it is yet another blatant attempt by the "road gang" to impose more concrete, more noise, and more heavy lorries on the people of Britain. Obviously the EEC would obtain far better value for money by investing wisely in the Channel Tunnel and rail electrification of the existing and under used B.R. routes to the ports of Holyhead, Ipswich and Southampton.

## EIB £25M FOR HST

A £25m. loan has been made by the European Investment Bank to BRB towards the £50m. cost of building 18 HSTs for the NE/SW services and to improve depots for HST maintenance. This is the fourth year that loans totalling £80m. have been granted to B.R. by the E.I.B. and as "Rail news" put it "it shows that someone up there" has confidence in the railway industry and is in full support of its further advancement as a vital part of the nation's economy."

## RAIL APPEAL!

It is interesting to note the increasing practise of some of B.R.'s competitors to sneak rail connotations to promote their road haulage interests. The National Freight Corporation's BRS parcels business now has a fleet of vans and lorries brightly labelled under the name "Roadline"; the G.P.O. has introduced an "Express Post"; delivery van service; and more recently B.L. are marketing their new lorry cab as the "Roadtrain"! Presumably this tactic reflects a credit upon our railways?



## Woodhead must be kept

The call of the RDS and NCI<sup>9</sup> for a public inquiry into the Woodhead line closure proposals has been echoed by Ray Buckton, General Secretary of ASLEF, who said "We think that B.R. should have consulted the local people... If the Board is so sure of its case why doesn't it consent to a public inquiry?" While closure might save money in the short term it would, in the long term, mean enormous additional expense to the taxpayer. The Woodhead line could be converted to 25KV a.c. relatively cheaply (some £20m.) but if it were closed B.R. would have to electrify another Trans-Pennine route at a possible cost of £200 million. The tunnels on the other Trans-Pennine routes are old and require constant and expensive maintenance; yet the Woodhead Tunnel is modern and well-maintained and moreover is the only one in the area that can take easily the 8'6" container traffic.

Although B.R. seems to think that the four Trans-Pennine routes are "parallel", this contradicts what it said in 1965 in its survey of the major trunk routes. B.R. has run a massive publicity campaign in favour of closure at great expense. If the freight route went the Greater Manchester P.T.E. would have to incur an extra £½m. a year to operate the Glossop electric service. The campaign to save Woodhead must go on and the RDS will play its part.

## R.D.S. DIARY

JUNE - 21st - 22nd "WHEELS 80" - RDS will be represented with a stand at this Transport Rally at Suffolk Showground, Further details from:- T.J.Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ

29th - RDS & SMTRUA are to run a special train from Sudbury to Sheringham, Further details from:- M.J.Davies, 45, Elm Road, Sudbury, Suffolk.

JULY - 13th - RDS & ADRAC are to run a special train from Reepham to Yarmouth, Further details from:- J.McGarter, York House, Church Street, Reepham, NR10 4JN

27th - RDS & WyDFRAC are to run a special train from Dereham to Sheringham, Further details from:- J.S.Hull, Cydonia Cottage, Station Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk

AUGUST - 16th - 17th - LEA VALLEY NATIONAL WATERWAYS FESTIVAL - RDS will be represented with a stand at this gathering, near Clapton, of up to 80,000 waterway enthusiasts, Further details and offers to man stand to:- G.L.Collett, 62, Glanville Road, Bromley Kent, BR2 9LW

# REGIONAL NOTES 13

## LONDON & HOME COUNTIES

Hope that B.R. would introduce cross London services was given a little encouragement by London & South East Passenger Manager, Philip Satchwell at a public meeting in Kilburn on 4th March. His subject was the West Hampstead Interchange - the proposal to connect the North London, Jubilee, Metropolitan and L.M. lines at a point where they cross in West End Lane, Kilburn. If implemented West Hampstead could provide a terminus for S.R. trains when Snow Hill is re-opened to provide a link from Blackfriars to Farringdon. No benefit to the travelling public could be introduced so cheaply as this scheme but Mr Satchwell insisted that even this would have to wait until the finances of B.R. and the country as a whole improved.

Turning to a less well known cross London link, i.e. Clapham Junc. - Olympia - Willesden, he saw this as having much less potential. Be that as it may both could be utilised to provide much needed services with minimal expenditure, other than some track laying and possibly new stations. The Branch Rail Development Sub-Committee is therefore preparing a report on this important subject of Cross-London Links.

With the steadily growing membership, now over 200, ways are being sought to involve members in local campaigns in particular by the formation of further rail users groups, and a start is being made with the Stratford - N.Woolwich line where a survey of local opinion is to be undertaken during the coming months. Although it is now just a year since the service was extended to Camden Road with new stations, including an interchange with L.T. at West Ham, provided with money from the G.L.C., reliability is still much to be desired due to a severe shortage of guards.

Finally it is pleasing to note that following exhortations to "Fly the Tube" the number of passengers utilising the L.T. link to Heathrow increased by 1 million to reach a record of 9 million in 1979.

## WEST MIDLANDS

The best news in the West Midlands has been the 130% increase in passenger journeys on the local commuter services over the last five years. Thus over 57,000 passengers a day now travel by train in and out of the city centre. The increase ranges from 30% on the Walsall route to 267% on the Shirley line.

On 10th April W.M. County Council decided to provide a new "rail" link to the nearby International station from



the airport, on the Coventry - Birmingham line, in the form of driverless car size vehicles running at up to 30 mph along a 600 yard concrete track. The Council is investing £11m. in a consortium with B.R. and Midland Industry for the £3m. scheme. Meanwhile protests by the Branch Committee, during March, against the WMPTE plan to spend £10m. on 170 new buses instead of new trains went unheeded.

We have argued that there is a far greater need to replace 21 year old suburban diesel trains than 12-15 yr. old buses, and are urging the PTE to buy some of the new class 210 DEMUs to give the much needed extra acceleration comfort, sliding doors and other benefits. The County Council has also proceeded, against our heavy protests, to purchase the 2 mile track between Handsworth Junc. and Swan Village from B.R. for a footpath involving work to the bridges and earthworks. This vital mid-section of the ex GWR Snow Hill - Wolverhampton line will sever operational freight lines at either end and prevent re-opening of the West Bromwich line which was the subject of an RDS Public Meeting on 27th March, addressed by Peter Snape, M.P. and attended by over 80 people.

Also in March an interesting issue arose regarding the right to revenue from local rail services. In deciding to introduce extra trains between Birmingham and Worcestershire towns the shire county found that B.R. was obliged to hand over all fares for journeys made on the New Street - Longbridge section to the WMPTE. This arose because B.R. operates the Longbridge trains for the PTE under a Sec. 20 agreement and the extra Worcestershire trains would form extensions of the PTE trains between Longbridge and Bromsgrove/Redditch. The shire county argued that as the PTE would be incurring no extra costs and the W.M. would benefit by less road congestion and maintenance the revenue from Worcestershire passengers should all go towards the cost of the extra trains, but alas the PTE are insisting that as they provided the trains in the first place and have to carry the Worcestershire passengers for 50% of the journey then half of the revenue must remain with the P.T.E.

## EAST ANGLIA

This years series of RDS special trains got off to a good start with 555 passengers carried on our longest train yet, a 9 coach loco-hauled train to London from Swavesey and other stations on the former Cambridge - St. Ives line on Sat. 12th April. The track into St. Ives was lifted during the Winter but the RDS will be watching for any developments which might obstruct the trackbed and inhibit its restoration.

The Branch held a meeting in Colchester on 21st March when the region's latest users' group was formed. This move followed complaints from commuters about the unreliable and overcrowded trains. Earlier in the year some 50 members attended the Branch A.G.M. at Ipswich on 19th January and heard of a 41% increase in membership in 1979. The meeting was then addressed by Mr G.O.B. Clarke, B.R.'s Divisional Manager for Norwich, who said that B.R.'s prospects were so good that they were beginning to encounter planning problems.

A possible new station for Felixstowe (Maritime) was mentioned together with a proposed Ipswich - Birmingham service to relieve overcrowding on the Harwich - Manchester boat trains.

The Branch has welcomed B.R.'s gradual introduction of refurbished 3 car DMUs in the Norwich Division as a step in the right direction. Comments have now been submitted on the Norfolk P.T.P. but regrettably this document fails to explain the 7% increase in local paytrain usage over 1979, or the possible implications of this trend on future policies. The Branch has also lodged an objection to the latest Ipswich By-pass proposals - which include a section deemed unnecessary by the Inspector at the 1977 Inquiry and have therefore asked the Dept. of Transport what studies, if any, have been made into the rail alternatives, as recommended by the 1978 Report of the Leitch Committee.

## YORKSHIRE & CLEVELAND

The North Yorkshire Structure Plan Inquiry, held in York dealt with the transport proposals on 21st March. However, the only organisations allowed to give evidence were the local Councils; the Min. of Ag.; C.P.R.E. and the A.A. It was stated that an annual subsidy of £750,000 is given to the bus services, but the role of rail travel within the County was dismissed in a single sentence.

In West Yorkshire the Panels report and the Secretary of State's modifications to the W.Y. Structure Plan have been published. Whilst it is stated that disused railway formations will be safeguarded, where appropriate, in case they are needed in the future, the Secretary of State has struck out the Panel's proposals to encourage development likely to generate rail traffic. The Branch has therefore lodged an objection to this action.

The rail sidings at both Skelton Grange Generating station in Leeds and at Wakefield have been closed and coal is now being delivered by road, though at Wakefield this is said only to be a temporary measure. An agreement between B.R. and Messrs: Hicksons & Walsh, Chemical Manufacturers of Castleford has not been renewed. The firm's sidings which needed some £40,000 spent on them were shut on 1st March and chemicals are now being sent by road.



## NORTH EAST ENGLAND

British Rail are now confident that they can provide enough drivers for the Tyneside Metro to allow for the Summer 1980 opening to go ahead. Provisional frequencies have been announced and some bus services will be altered. Further ideas include extensions of the Metro and to run trams in Newcastle streets to link with it. Tyne & Wear have approved an open crossing with flashing lights at Fawden station on the Kenton Bank Foot section in the face of much opposition. B.R. are to speed up trains on the Newcastle - Carlisle line in May by reducing the number of trains calling at Haydon Bridge, Bardon Mill and Brampton.

Durham County Council have asked the TUC and BR to look into the lack of stopping trains at Durham between 12.45 and 14.45 on 4 days of the week in Winter, when the Summer lunch time trains have in fact proved very popular. Despite the likely loss of the steel traffic on the Consett line B.R. arranged a special train to allow the County C.I. to inspect the route for a suggested hourly service between Newcastle and Consett plus a completely new service between South Pelaw and Washington. Northumberland C.C. and B.R. are also investigating a service to Ashington.

## NORTH WEST ENGLAND

On 18th February a successful meeting was held at Blackburn as part of the "Your Local Trains in the 80s" campaign. Speakers referred to the urgent need for better rolling stock and track in the Preston area and the lack of investment in the railway infrastructure, especially level crossings. In addition to the existing STELLA activity, on the East Lancs. Line, attention is now to be given to the Preston - Ormskirk and Kirkham - Blackpool South lines which rely solely on passenger revenue and, given B.R.'s cash limits for this year are increasingly at risk. Development of the latter is becoming more important as Fylde Borough Council is refusing rate subsidy for its bus undertaking and there is talk of the buses operating only from 7.a.m. - 7.p.m., six days a week.

On Merseyside traffic has increased by 40% average on the Merseyrail network since the opening of the Loop and Link lines in 1977; and the Northern lines to Southport and Ormskirk have recorded a 100% increase. Booking Offices at Liverpool Central have been enlarged for two extra windows. The Royal Seaforth Freightliner Depot was at last commissioned in February with containers being "Trip" worked initially from Garston Depot.

From 3rd March reduced staffing and paytrain operation were introduced on the Rock Ferry/Hooton line.

From May some Rock Ferry - Chester trains will run non-stop to meet increasing use and overcrowding. A new Station is due to open in October at Birchwood, east of Warrington, on the Liverpool - Manchester line to serve the developing new town.

## WALES

In Clwyd, over 40 people attended a public meeting called by the RDS at Wrexham on 11th April and agreed to form the Wrexham - Bidston Rail Users' Association. RDS member Mr C.R. Tolliday chaired the meeting which was addressed by County Transport Officer Mr M. Gylie and the Area Manager of B.R. WBRUA now plan more signposting,ursions and leafleting for the line.

In Gwynedd, the railways have recently enjoyed a double boost due to the commendable actions of the County Council. In November 1979 they produced a new rail timetable booklet in conjunction with B.R. and Grosvenor, giving superb, easy to read, information on the train services on the North Wales Coast Line; Conway Valley and Cambrian Coast Lines. It costs 5p. and is available from Rail stations, Bus offices, and many local shops. In January this year the County announced the go-ahead for the capital project to provide a new Central Station at Blaenau Ffestiniog, to serve both the B.R. line from Llandudno and the Steam Railway from Porthmadog. Gwynedd C.C. already sponsor an annual conference on the Cambrian Coast Line and are to be congratulated on their very sensible, positive and forward approach to public transport.

## EAST MIDLANDS

"The most ambitious and far reaching proposal ever put forward by a private railway company since the nationalisation of the railways in 1948" is how Peak Rail Operations Ltd., describe its proposals for reinstating the line from Matlock to Buxton. Their report entitled "A Line for All Seasons", published in February, describes how the line would cater both for Summer visitors and provide an all-the-year-round service not at the mercy of the weather as so many roads are. They aim to operate freight trains, principally for limestone, and thus help to reduce the number of heavy lorries in the area. Rebuilding the 20 miles of line could take up to 10 years at an estimated cost of £1.5m. The report sets out how this money could be raised, by both voluntary efforts and from commercial sponsorship. It could be an interesting example of co-operation between BR and private enterprise with perhaps through services and freight between Sheffield and Derby.

Further details from the P.R.O., 62, Uttoxeter Road, Nickleover, Derby. (See over)



## SOUTH EAST MIDLANDS

In Milton Keynes, following earth removal and bridge construction, work has now commenced on the station structure and tracks for the new £5m. rail station just south of Wolverton. It will have 4 through platforms of inter-city standard and a turnback facility for local EMUs. It is scheduled for completion in late 1981. Following a survey of local opinion on the Bedford - Blotchley line the RDS conclusions are:- to re-route trains away from St. Johns to Bedford (Midland Road); certain trains to run non-stop; some new halts and trains extended to the new Milton Keynes. These topics were fully ventilated at a public meeting held in Bedford on 15th March when a local Rail Users' Association was set up.

Referring back to the previous item the S.E. Midland Representative is chartering a train on 20th September from Stevenage, via Hitchin, Biggleswade and Peterborough to the Matlock line.

## SEVERN SIDE

On 25th January, Transport Minister, Norman Fowler, stated that a study is being made for a second rail crossing of the River Severn to supplement the existing rail tunnel. For further news from this area see "RAIL SOUTH-WEST" - No.2. available from the Sales Dept. (address on p.3) Price: 20p. incl. postage.

## SCOTLAND

The Lothian Regional Council has cancelled plans for a £40m. new Inner City Road project in Edinburgh in favour of improved public transport. A Western approach road to Leith and several relief roads, some using old railway lines have been abandoned and the Council are discussing with B.R. possible improvements to passenger services by such projects as new stations at Livingstone, Currie, Westerhailes and Wallyford. Light rapid transit is also under consideration.

Formed in 1978, the Cumbernauld Commuters Association has been urging the electrification of the outer section of the Glasgow line beyond Springburn, now covered by a DMU shuttle. From May B.R. are stopping six WCML Inter-city trains at Cumbernauld for a 2 year trial.

On 16th April the Glasgow Underground opened a limited service to the public. It has cost £52.98m. and for a flat fare of 20p. passengers can travel on brand new 2 car trains running at six minute intervals. Completely modernised, CWR is featured throughout and good interchange is provided at most of the 15 stations with buses and the B.R. system.

## Members' Platform

(For conditions of publication see last issue p.9)

DMU v DEMU

Dear Sir,

I am writing with reference to the letter in RDN, No.5, on DMU replacement. I cannot agree with C. Mather that a 2 axle 60 mph DMU is the right answer. I have had an opportunity to compare these between Salisbury and Southampton and the mechanical units are definitely inferior and usually at least 10 mins. down on the timetable, whereas the DEMU had no difficulty and even had spare power.

The two types have, on paper, similar top speeds and power/weight ratios but as far as I can determine the problem with the DMU is centred on the use of gears which need to be changed as the train accelerates. With a six coach train, having 8 gear boxes, this can be jerky and prolonged. The Hampshire DEMUs accelerate as though they have an infinitely variable gearbox. Another advantage of the DEMU is that it is possible to design them to draw power from the overhead wires or third rail, as available, without having to fit the appropriate equipment in regions where lines are not electrified.

R.Goldring, Southampton.

TAUNTON N.U.R.

Dear Sir,

We are all conversant, I trust, about existing Inter-City services, so if I quote 2 hrs. 20mins for Paddington - Taunton, I am not far out. My emphasis must be that the extra 26 odd miles to Minehead by Western National bus will more or less double your travelling time and if you just miss one you may well have 2 hours to wait.

That is why there is such a demand for a train service from Taunton to Minehead to be reinstated and for years I have been campaigning for the N.U.R. to influence their bus members to cease "Blacking" the line from Taunton to Bishop's Lydeard. The N.U.R. had their opportunity to be belligerent from the time of the Beeching era and obviously their reactions were so ineffective when it came to saving the Minehead (and Barnstaple) lines.

They purport to be interested in the restoration of the railways but there was no encouragement from this source at the time of the formation of the West Somerset Railway when it was anticipated that there would be an automatic takeover from B.R. The trouble is that the Unions consider themselves to be sacrosanct these days and their ideas of a democratic system is utterly paradoxical. I think it is diabolical that a handful of busmen can persist in denying the majority of their brothers an efficient and sensible form of transport.

H.J.Snewing, Worthing



RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Number SEVEN

JUNE 1980

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\* An announcement about distribution will be made with the next issue. In the meantime any queries re R.D.N. should be sent to the Editor.

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(This issue edited by A.Bevan & G.L.Collett)

Mr Bevan is responsible for REGIONAL NOTES, Mr Barfield for all other material. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in August) all material must be in the hands of the appropriate Editor by WEDNESDAY 16th July 1980