

Railway Development News

Railway Development Society

A Voice for Rail Users

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THE TRUTH ABOUT SETTLE - CARLISLE

Recent press reports, beginning with the Daily Telegraph of October 5th 1984, could lull the rail lobby into believing that the Settle to Carlisle line has been saved. This is certainly not the case and the campaign continues as before. So why have the papers printed that the line has been saved for 5 years? All that has happened is that B.R. have made a realistic assessment of how long the closure procedure will take to complete.

To date there are 20,000 (and a dog!) registered objectors to the closure. This is the largest ever to be achieved for any rail closure proposal. This clearly demonstrates the support the line has and the strength of the rail lobby. Having received such a mountain of paper the Transport Users Consultative Committees (T.U.C.C.s) will need at least 18 months to wade through it, according to British Rail. Afterwards there will be two separate TUCC hearings, one held by the N.W. area and the other by the Yorkshire area (providing it still exists! There are plans to merge it with the N.E. area during April 1985 and the question of who will chair the new area has still to be decided). Once these procedures have been completed the TUCC's will then have to agree upon and write their report to the Minister. All

in all B.R. say this could take at least a year.

By this time the next General Election will be very close. The Settle to Carlisle line passes through three Conservative marginal constituencies and the campaign has shown that railways can be a sensitive political issue.

Thus B.R. conclude they will have to run the line until 1988/89 at least. By then the whole political climate may have changed.

In the meantime there is no room at all for complacency. The Settle to Carlisle Joint Action Group (comprising the RDS, T2000 and the Friends of the S/C Line Association) is forming itself into a Limited Company and is seeking to raise £55,000 in order to fund secretarial help and to rent proper offices. The Company was due to be launched in November when the campaign hoped to receive some very substantial contributions.

Not until the Minister refuses permission to close the line can anyone claim that the line is saved. Until then the relentless campaign to save this line and therefore much of the provincial sector continues.

Richard Watts

RDS STATES CASE FOR CHANNEL TUNNEL!

With increasing speculation over Government approval to a scheme for a fixed channel link with France it is considered that members should be made aware of the Society's policy on this major project. The following statement is therefore issued on behalf of its International & E.E.C. Committee, and is supported by the National Council on Inland Transport.

"It is highly desirable that transport links between member countries of the EEC should be improved where possible. The continuing growth in cross-channel traffic now makes a Fixed Channel Link of vital importance, but it is essential that its benefits are spread over the whole of the United Kingdom and that it has no damaging environmental consequences.

A Rail tunnel would undoubtedly be the cheapest option and provide the greatest long-term benefit.

The link should be constructed from the outset for two rail tracks capable of taking all continental rolling stock, be linked to a service tunnel with minimal terminals in Kent but providing long-distance links between points of origin and destination -

AND IT SHOULD BE BUILT NOW!

Further information from: R.F. White, "Latymer", The Drive, Belmont, Surrey, SM2 7DJ.

ROAD AND RAIL COSTS REVEALED

The Chairman's latest remarks concerning the M25 Motorway (R.D.N. Issue 21) gave me cause for further study of the Coopers-Lybrand report. It occurs to me that, in its haste to bury the case for converting railways into roads, R.D.S. has too easily dismissed the information on road costs that this report provides.

Consider, for example, the section of the report dealing with Kew-Barnes. Here a two lane road for cars only is postulated on which the car driver, unhindered and unhindered by any other class of vehicle or traffic, would be able to demonstrate his economic prowess alone. The estimated cost of conversion of this section works out at £719,512 per lane kilometre whilst that of the recently opened section of the M25, at £1,562,512 per lane kilometre, is over twice that amount. With an estimated 24,600 motoring customers daily the hypothetical Kew-Barnes road is expected to incur an annual deficit of £750,000. The direct charge for its use is quoted at 5p to 7.5p per vehicle kilometre whilst that for use of a motorway (£1 tax per gallon, 33.3 miles per gallon) is 3p per MILE (1 mile equals approx. 8/5 kilometre ED). It therefore requires an extra £1.66 or more to be levied if the direct charge for motorway use is to be made equal to that of the hypothetical ex-railway.

Even if we disregard the differences in capital costs and assume all other cost factors to be equal, it would appear that 73,800 cars should be using all six lane motorways daily (paying the extra £1.66 on each gallon consumed in so doing) before such motorways can rise to the inefficiency of a converted railway - and the D.O.T. is not expecting 60,000 vehicles per day on the M25 until 1987.

In case it appears unfair to quote the Kew-Barnes example, I shall stress that the West London line shows the highest conversion cost (just less than 1m per lane kilometre) while the lowest direct charge is to be found in the Kew-Cricklewood case (3p to 5p per vehicle kilometre for an ALL PURPOSE road). By comparison the above mentioned 33.3 miles per gallon is equivalent to 53 kilometres per pound, i.e. less

than 2p per kilometre for motorway usage.

In their quest to convince everyone that road was realistically cheaper than rail, railway conversionists had to prove that, amongst other things, road accidents and congestion imposed no financial burdens on the community at large. They lost both these goals long ago to the tune of billions on the debit side of road traffic.

The Coopers-Lybrand report alludes to the charging of congestion costs (page 31) and then apparently rejects the idea. It makes no mention of accidents or their costs and it can be assumed that they are excluded from the charges quoted and are accountable and chargeable in some other way.

The idea that motorists are undercharged and over-taxed for all but the old uncongested rural roads is not new and this report not only adds weight to this but also to a plethora of evidence which shows that British Rail faces subsidised competition on all sides.

The Coopers-Lybrand report was described in the popular press as a knock-out blow for rail to road conversion. We can and should ask what kind of blow it has dealt to the motorway concept.

Kenneth R. Shaw

WELSH RAILWAY DECIMATION RESISTED!

Members may have read in the press of proposals by the Welsh Office* which could largely decimate the local rail system by Bus/Rail substitution. Apart from other steps which are being taken at Parliamentary level to oppose legislation which would make such steps easier the Society (through the Chairman of its Branches & Areas Committee) has made representations on the document to Gareth Wardell M.P., Chairman of the Select Committee on Welsh Affairs.

In welcoming the opportunity to comment RDS accepted that there is always likely to be a need for public transport in the Principality, since not all members of the community are able, or indeed may wish, to drive a car. It therefore stressed that what remains of the Welsh railway network should be retained, and that the possibility of restoring passenger services on certain freight-only routes should be seriously considered.

Whilst never arguing that British Rail should be "feather-bedded" we re-iterated our view that the present terms of competition between trains and long-distance coaches is not entirely fair and that we are yet to be convinced that further de-regulation of buses will benefit the rural areas, citing our ex-

periences in North West Norfolk. RDS can, therefore, see no case for substituting buses for trains as proposed in the Report* as whilst they may cost less per mile to operate than a train (in some cases) if they earn less revenue then this will prove to be a false economy.

Furthermore we see no case for splitting Welsh lines into groups; or for handing them over to the County Councils. Most run through more than one county and if implemented the proposals could well lead to the sort of wrangling which has been going on between South and West Yorkshire County Councils over the future of the Huddersfield - Sheffield service.

RDS therefore sees the best future for Welsh railways for them to be left in the hands of B.R. and for local needs to be represented by independent user groups as exist for the Heart of Wales Line, Glamorgan Valleys lines and most importantly the Cambrian Coast Line. Local Authorities should certainly be encouraged to take an interest in rail services and provide some financial help, where appropriate - they should not however be expected to subsidise the basic service, which should continue to be the responsibility of Central Government through PSO grant.

Lines suggested for bus/rail substitution* are Cambrian Coast, Conway Valley, Central Wales and a number in the south and, as will be seen from REGIONAL NOTES, British Rail itself certainly has alternative ideas for their future which RDS fully supports and will strongly resist decimation of Welsh railways which the above* would entail.

*Consultation Paper - A Local Choice in Public Transport. Welsh Office, July 1984.

10 YEARS AGO!

(extract from RIS Newsletter of December 1974.)

"...last winter the cost of petrol went up by over 50%. Rail fares, in comparison, went up a mere 12½% and then not until June."

"...comparing 1974 rail fares and other prices with those of forty years ago... according to our recollection the 1934 single fare from Cambridge to London was about seven shillings. The 1974 fare is £1.44, that is, it has gone up four times. Also according to our recollection, the cost of cars has gone up about ten times, of clothes, food, beer, tobacco and petrol by similar amounts and houses probably more. You can all make your comparisons. Can you think of anything that has gone up between 1934 and 1974 by so little as rail fares?" (What is it now? ED.)



Residents of Winslow greet RDS/ADPRA Special to Milton Keynes on 9th June 1984 Photo: Buckingham & Winslow Advertiser

AYLESBURY GROUP SEEKS NORTHERN OUTLET

Some RDS members left a crowded meeting called by the Aylesbury & District Railway Passengers Association in Winslow on 6th November with a certain well placed feeling of satisfaction.

ADPRA had itself been set up following an equally crowded meeting held in Aylesbury a year earlier following the inclusion of the closure of Marylebone as an appendage to the BRB Corporate Plan. Ironically only a year before that had been able to muster barely a dozen people to a similar meeting, but sufficient joined RDS to form the nucleus from which ADPRA was to emerge. During the year, guidance from the Society was offered whenever needed which decreased as the Group found its feet and a healthy liaison between the two organisations is still maintained.

Returning to the events at Winslow, satisfaction arose largely from the announcement by British Rail that it was to run a series of "shoppers specials" before Christmas linking the principal towns of Buckinghamshire with Milton Keynes, stopping at Quainton Road and even more adventurously at Winslow. There a new narrow crossing is being installed to enable passenger facilities to be restored and the train due to call on 24th November will have been the first for 18 years.

This BR initiative, primarily from the Area Management, is undoubtedly the result of the special train run by ADPRA with RDS backing last June and which

has pointed the way to what BR expect to be a healthy commercial venture. Incidentally those members who supported the special can take a share of the credit, which venture was considered to be a major step forward, and events have proved this to be true. Hopefully next time even more support will be forthcoming.

By the time members read this article the pre-Christmas trains will probably have been run but BR have intimated that more will follow. One on 22nd December will depend on 'enthusiast' demand but trips to the January Sales are also envisaged. If members would care to send SAEs to High Wycombe Travel Centre marked "Milton Keynes Specials" BR will undoubtedly send details of the next dates when they are due.

As members may be aware ADPRA are campaigning for the restoration of a passenger service north of Aylesbury and have many useful ideas in the pipeline. They are worthy of your support in the following ways; become a member (£1.00 minimum); send a donation (no minimum). They hope to brief Counsel to represent them at the forthcoming inquiry into the closure of Marylebone by the L.R.P.C. which does not come cheap and are always in need of help with surveys and leaflet distribution and last but not least support for Milton Keynes shopper specials. Write TODAY to Peter Clarke, 49 Risborough Road, Stoke Mandeville, Bucks. HP16 9DR.

WANTED!

Volunteers are required to assist with the production of an updated version of the former RIS booklet "CAN BUS REPLACE TRAIN?" and in the production of a somewhat larger publication arguing the case for railway development. Those interested should write to Mr.G.J.Roper, 11 Causewayside, The Fen Causeway, Cambridge CB3 9HD.

Similarly, the ROAD & RAIL COMMITTEE needs more members. If you would like to assist then please contact Mr.A.Oldfield, 14 Long Lane, Worrall, Sheffield S30 3AF.

Dynamic New Sales Officer

Could you handle a stock of some 10 different lines, including both books and leaflets (250 on average per line in stock) including some invoicing? Due to a re-organisation of Society Officers this post is now vacant!

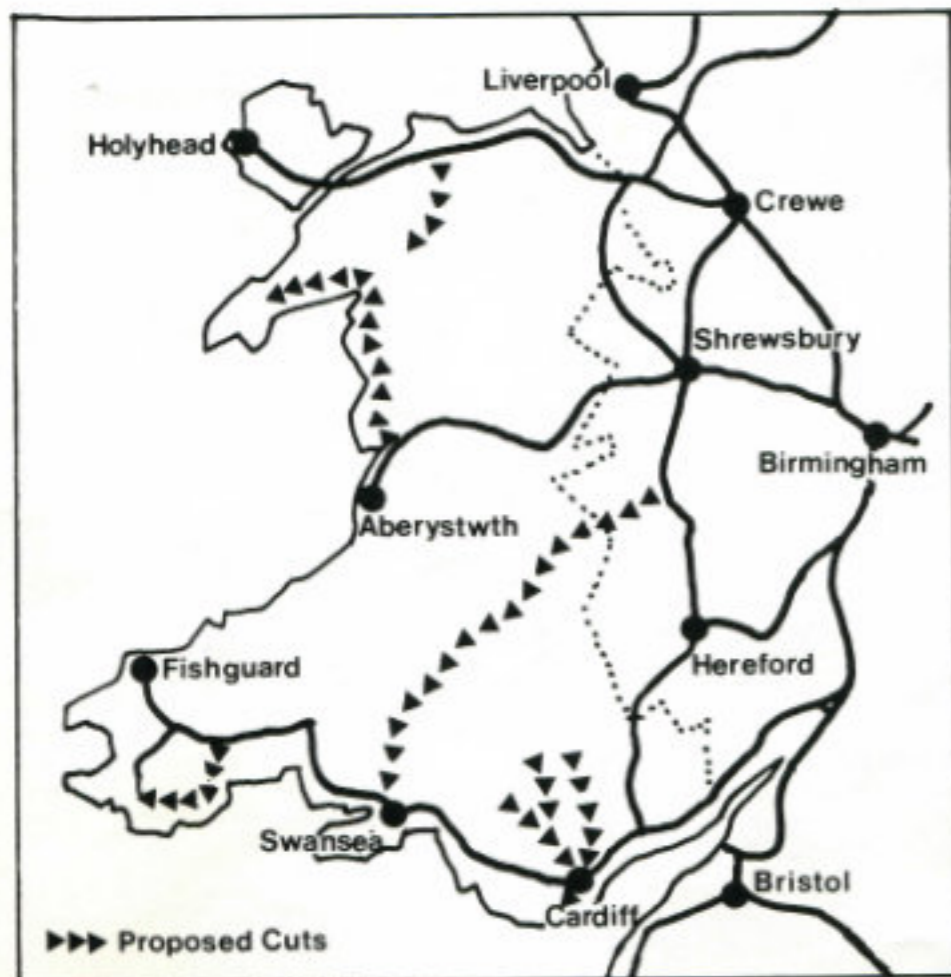
Without a suitable marketing outlet the production of new publications cannot be justified and the Society is starved of vital funds. If you feel you could fill the gap please write NOW to the General Secretary, Mr.R.J.P. Townsend, St.Julians, Sevenoaks, Kent.

N.B. Until a new Sales Officer is appointed all enquiries regarding Society publications, leaflets, etc., should be addressed to the General Secretary.

MEMBERSHIP SURVEY - To assist the National Committee in servicing members needs and to enlist assistance in various fields enclosed with this issue of RDN is a QUESTIONNAIRE which members are urged to complete and return in the envelope provided. You do not have to answer all the questions, or to give your name and address, if you do not wish to and all information received will be treated with the strictest confidence.

E.G.M. 9th February 1985

Also enclosed with this issue is formal notice of an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society convened to consider, in particular, various amendments to the Constitution, details of which are appended thereto. Please indicate whether you intend to be present or as an alternative complete the voting slip and return it so as to be in the hands of the General Secretary not less than 24 hours before the meeting for your vote(s) to be valid.



MEMBERS' PLATFORM

Railways in Japan

Sir,
I would like to comment on Tony Speller's letter concerning his railway experiences in Japan. I have lived in Japan for eight years now, and have travelled fairly extensively - usually by train.

There are a significant number of private lines in Japan, and most of them provide an efficient and inexpensive service. I have not travelled on the line Mr. Speller mentioned but have used others like it - for example, the private lines running from Tokyo to the resort towns of Hakone and Nikko. My impressions were similar to those recounted in Mr. Speller's letter.

The point I would like to make is that the private lines in Japan generally run through densely-populated areas which provide plenty of passengers throughout the day. For the companies which operate these lines, running railways is only a small part of their business; most own department stores, apartment blocks, driving schools, amusement parks and a whole variety of other facilities in the vicinity of the railway lines they run. In the case of the district of Tokyo in which I live, there are large numbers of people who live in apartments or houses built by the Tokyu Corporation, shop at supermarkets and department stores owned by Tokyu and go to work on Tokyu trains! Thus the economic factors at play are more complex than might at first appear to be the case.

There are not many private lines in rural areas in Japan. Even the line described in Mr. Speller's letter serves - at least at the Kyoto end - a highly-populated area, if one considers the Kyoto-Osaka-Kobe conurbation. Most of the rural lines in Japan are part of the Japan National Railways network which, while highly efficient and extremely modern in comparison with many national systems, nonetheless has a huge deficit which successive Japanese governments have regarded as one of their biggest problems.

Though I am full of praise concerning the standards of service offered by private railway lines in Japan, they have to be seen in the context of the population densities of the areas they serve and the overall activities of the companies that operate them. It might not be easy to transfer some of the BR network into private ownership and expect the lines to be transformed into the types of operation that can be found in Japan.

On the other hand, if such transfers did take place and the companies concerned had even half of the enterprise that the Japanese show in many areas of

business, there might be a chance of success!

Stephen Turner
Tokyo, Japan

Where are the women? (iii)

Sir,
May I, as a woman and a relatively new member of R.D.S., make a few comments on the paucity of women members?

Any organisation wishing to increase its membership needs not only to publicise itself but also to convince potential members of its aims and effectiveness as a campaigning body. I suggest that R.D.S. has not really been successful in any of these areas.

Having obtained members, in order to retain them a society then needs to make them feel involved; if many male members share the attitude of Mr. T.E. Rookes (issue No.21) then that would certainly not be the case with women who joined R.D.S. Those women who are prepared to take an interest in public affairs are unlikely to tolerate being patronised and stereotyped as they were in his letter.

Finally, the kind of woman most likely to join a society such as R.D.S. is also likely to lead a busy life and would be prepared to join and take an active role only if she felt that the society was capable of achieving its aims through an effective and coherent campaign strategy.

Joan Coombes
Ipswich, Suffolk

Where are the Women (iv)

Sir,
I was intrigued and amused by Mr. Rooke's letter in issue No.21. Am I not right in thinking that a woman has taken over Mr. Patrick Moore's post in astronomy?

As for myself I've enclosed three proofs of my activities to keep the local line a double track. My husband attributes my interest in childhood weekends spent with my father picking blackberries and crab apples by the L.M.S. railway line at Blisworth before World War Two. Perhaps there is a lesson here for the parents of today?

By the way, I used to be fascinated by a tiny old engine that travelled from Blisworth to, I believe, Towchester. My father explained that railway engine chimneys grew taller the older they got, which, when one comes to think of it, is basically true. It would be nice to think of that old engine lovingly preserved in some museum today.

Sincerely,

Janet Repton
Bradford-on-Avon, Wiltshire

(Mrs. Repton enclosed press cuttings from the "Wiltshire Times" and the "Bath and West Evening Chronicle" showing her to have been instrumental in the successful campaign against singling between Bathampton Junction and Bradford on Avon. ED.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor will consider for publication letters and articles (such as the above). Any opinions expressed, however, must not be taken as necessarily reflecting the official views of the Society.

The Editor also reserves the right to make "cuts". Letters must normally be signed with the writer's real names. Only in exceptional circumstances, which must be clearly stated in a covering letter, will they be accepted for publication under a "nom de plume".

Photographs for R.D.N. - The Editor is always pleased to receive good quality black & white prints of subjects of interest to members for inclusion in the Journal. There has, however, been a glut of Photos of locomotives and trains. It would be appreciated if other subjects of more general interest (such as people) could be featured in future ED.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - With this issue of RDN will be enclosed to those members who have renewed their Annual Subscription a NEW MEMBERSHIP CARD. If, however, your subscription falls due for renewal within the next 3 months A RENEWAL FORM IS ENCLOSED. Please return it with your remittance as soon as possible to the new Membership Secretary, F.J.Hastilow, 21 Norfolk Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B75 6SQ and a DONATION over and above your subscription will always be gratefully received.

N.B. Due to rising costs and an increase in the Society's activities, the National Committee, at its meeting on 10th November, reluctantly concluded that an increase in subscription rates was inevitable and these are summarised in the enclosed leaflet which also contains details of new and valuable concessions to members. **As an added incentive to renew promptly, all subscriptions received BEFORE 1st January 1985 will be accepted at the existing rates.**

If you also subscribe to the Lottery remember that only fully paid up members can participate. So check that you are not in arrears otherwise your tickets may have to be withdrawn from the draw.

LONDON & HOME COUNTIES

"Two down and one to go" is the score on the rail closure front with the Inquiry into the closure of Broad Street-Dalston Junc. having been held by the London Regional Passengers' Committee on 3rd October where our case was led by Branch Chairman, John Barfield, aided by secretary, David Martins, who as a regular user enlarged upon our written objection. The Branch concentrated in its evidence on the effect of closure on longer distance users, that for local passengers having been ably put by representatives of the Local Authorities and Rail Users' Groups (principally the North London Line Committee). On this occasion we were also representing the East Anglian Branch Chairman, as a personal objection, and the proceedings revealed that other regular users of the interchange (Broad Street/Liverpool Street) came from as far away as Colchester - one of whom would have to seek alternative employment if the line closed.

Representations have since been sent to the Secretary of State for Transport on the broader issues of the closure proposal and the Branch Secretary is also pressing the Committee for the results of the deliberations of its predecessor (the T.U.C.C. for London) on Stratford-Tottenham Hale. Meanwhile its resources are being mobilised for what could be our "Settle-Carlisle", namely the closure of Marylebone and the lines to Harrow and Northolt. Here it will be concentrating on the Neasden-Northolt section (subject of a previous proposal in the 1970s) and we have already received details from a member of Hastings who will be denied convenient access to Wembley Complex for which a multi-million pound development plan has only recently been announced. A meeting to co-ordinate action was held by the Local Authorities at Wembley Town Hall on 23rd October and more news on this major issue will appear in the next R.D.N.

Developments in London and the South East are, however, not all gloom and doom for, whilst the new London Regional Transport Authority which was swept into power on 29th June has now discounted any possibility of early development of the West London Line (as proposed by the G.L.C.) BR has unveiled proposals to develop the Snow Hill link between Farringdon and Blackfriars via the "widened lines", simply because it could lead to considerable savings in terminal costs by implementing cross-London running - something which the former RDA had been advocating for over 20 years. It may not therefore be too ridiculous to suggest that trains could be running

REGIONAL NOTES

from Bedford to Sevenoaks by the early 1990s.

In a recent letter to the Branch Chairman, Gordon Pettitt, Deputy Director, L & S.E. Sector has confirmed that BR is to electrify the Camden-Stratford link on both third rail d.c. (passenger) and 25kv (overhead) to fill a serious gap in London's electrified freight network. Also welcome is the news that Romford-Upminster is to join Wickford-Southminster in BR's programme of eliminating non-electrified links on its Great Eastern lines which would completely eliminate diesel operation from Stratford (other than for Inter-City services).

On 29th September about a dozen Branch members travelled over some of the lesser-used, but picturesque, Southern Region lines - namely Guildford-Redhill-Tonbridge and Paddock Wood-Strood. It was a campaign by the former RIS in the 1960s which persuaded BR to develop the former which might otherwise have fallen a victim to Beeching's axe. One disturbing revelation of the trip was the dilapidated condition of some of the more important stations; that at Redhill being under surgery and the booking office and other facilities at Guildford appearing to be nothing more than temporary huts, hardly befitting the County Town of Surrey.

The next major event in the Branch's programme, the A.G.M. at the House of Commons on 13th November, was due to be addressed by Vice-Presidents Robert Adley and Peter Snape. It is nearly 10 years since a Branch Meeting was held at the House and we have no doubt that members were no less enlightened than when Nigel Spearing gave a talk to RIS members in 1975.

The Branch Exhibition has also been doing the rounds and reached as far as Leeds on 22nd September when we were pleased to assist the Yorkshire Branch in manning a stand (with representatives of the Settle-Carlisle Assn.) at the Neville Hill Open Day. It also appeared at Stoke Poges on 23rd October. Requests for other locations will always be welcome.

JWB

WEST MIDLANDS

Government approval was given on 5th October for the construction of Telford's £2m. station. The Development Corporation is contributing £1.4m. and the new 2 platform station will have a car park for 250 vehicles. Meanwhile in Birmingham at the Moor Street tunnel portal preparatory work started in September for the new 'through' platforms and a planning application has

also been submitted for the new station at Snow Hill. Birmingham's Moor Street-Snow Hill link is due to open in May 1987 some 15 years after the last train ran in March 1972.

British Rail have still not formally issued closure notices for the Henley-in-Arden-Stratford-on-Avon line and we noted that in talks with the rail unions on 21st August intended to avert industrial action the BRB declared "it had no further proposals in mind for passenger line closures beyond those already placed into the public procedure." However, BR have since said they still intend to go ahead with this scheme! Several Local Authorities are opposing the closure and the Tyseley Museum also wants to keep the line open for steam trips.

Novel forms of transport have been to the fore in the West Midlands. In July the County Council announced proposals for a £266m. Light Rapid Transit network using both highways and rail routes radiating from Birmingham city centre. At special meetings RDS members debated its merits and whilst there is no doubt that LRT can provide a modern, efficient, and attractive transport system which would help improve business confidence and the image of the area it was nevertheless considered that the longer journeys to places such as Four Oaks and Lichfield should remain operated by the faster conventional rail services. The Airport Mag-Lev shuttle was sampled by an RDS party on 27th September who travelled on a two-car 'train' and were most impressed. On 9th October another W.M. scheme was inaugurated in the form of the guided bus route known as 'Trackline 65' where a pair of small horizontal guide wheels are used to align the bus within concrete kerbs for automatic steering.

On 28th August the Redditch group convened a Public meeting in the Town Hall when B.R. proposals to alter early morning train times were explained and debated. Walsall Rail Supporters also ran a DMU charter from Rugeley and Hednesford to the Severn Valley Railway on 30th August offering inclusive travel over the extended Kidderminster-Bridgenorth steam line. A group of Midlands members visited Merseyside on Saturday 6th October to sample rail routes, stock and stations; and also enjoyed a tour of the power signal box and control centre.

The Midlands AGM was held on 20th October when it was reported that both membership and assets had increased considerably. Following requests from an RDS member to the PTE Advisory Committee approval has been given to

restore 12 half-hourly off-peak trains on the New Street-Walsall line. What's more the PTE have found that it will more than cover its costs! For the Walsall-Cannock-Hednesford line the County Councils are again debating total or marginal costings, - the latter of which may prove to be a stumbling block as already referred to in the ACC Review of Rural Railways. A party of County and BR VIP's travelled the line by special train on 17th August accompanied by the press and an RDS representative. A public meeting was held in Cannock on 31st October to further promote the re-opening project.

Alan Bevan

EAST ANGLIA

Encouraged by BR's abandonment of its controversial proposal to single part of the Ipswich-Norwich main line, the Branch has issued a paper commenting on singling proposals elsewhere in the region. We oppose any singling of the St. Edmunds line (Ipswich-Ely) or any further singling of the Ely-Lynn route at the present time. Some experimental single-line working between Oulton Broad and Reedham could be tried; and BR's proposals for some re-arrangement of tracks along the Sheringham line seem not unreasonable.

On the Breckland line (Norwich-Ely) money needs to be spent urgently on track relaying. We would prefer the entire route to remain double, but if any has to be singled it should be with modern signalling at high speed junctions. An RDS/WyDRAC special to Clacton from the freight-only Dereham branch on September 16th carried 200 passengers, and plans are now well advanced for two more excursions from our freight-only lines in 1985.

Three officers of the Branch met David Curry, MEP (NE Essex) on 6th October for a useful discussion ranging from railfreight at Harwich to rail links to an expanded Stansted Airport. A new 6-page pamphlet entitled "Rail Strategy for East Anglia" was launched by the Branch in November mapping out the way RDS thinks the region's rail network should develop for the rest of the 1990s and beyond. The pamphlet is free (but donations are welcome) from John Brodribb, 12 Kemp's Lane, Beccles, Suffolk (please send large SAE).

Forthcoming meetings are to be held on Tuesday 15th January, 7.30pm, at the YMCA, Gonville Place, Cambridge when a speaker from BR will deal with local electrification whilst the Branch A.G.M. will be held at 2.00pm on Saturday February 23rd at Central Library, Bury St. Edmunds. After the formal business there will be a talk by Eldon Griffiths (local MP and a former Junior Transport Minister).

Trevor Garrod

YORKSHIRE

Following the success of diverting the Sheffield to Huddersfield trains via Barnsley, Silkstone Common station (between Barnsley and Penistone) was due to re-open on November 19th. Meanwhile British Rail, in the light of the Settle-Carlisle fiasco, has re-issued the Sec. 56 notices for the Denby Dale to Huddersfield section of the line which lies in West Yorkshire. They have also re-issued them for the Midland main line between Goose Hill Junction and Wath Road Junction, following the observations made by the Chairman of the Yorkshire T.U.C.C. at the Inquiry in Wakefield in July.

In September the battered central jetty of the Goole Swing Bridge suffered a further clout when it was hit by a freighter attempting to pass through stern first in foggy conditions. British Rail have authorised the immediate expenditure of about £10,000 on first aid repairs. At the beginning of October Humberside County Council offered up to £400,000 to B.R. towards the cost of repairing the central jetty but following a meeting with the Council B.R. declined the offer. Meanwhile B.R. are continuing to run down the port of Goole by transferring the freight traffic elsewhere, the number of sidings within the docks having been reduced to four (originally it was 19).

On a more positive note however, work has begun to build a new passenger line in Rotherham and to re-open the town's Central station. Sponsored by BR & SYPTC it involves construction of a new link from the Midland main line just south of Rotherham Masborough station to the former G.C. route between Sheffield and Doncaster used at present only for freight. This will enable Sheffield-Doncaster trains to run once again to the original station demolished during the Beeching era. The £2m. cost, which also includes new stations at Swinton, Thurnscoe and Goldthorpe, is to be met largely by the County Council.

West Yorkshire County Council are planning to re-use the Spen Valley line (between Bradford and Dewsbury) as an electric tramway to serve commercial and recreational centres and a major new transport museum at Low Moor where a new BR interchange is also proposed.

Dennis Bradbury

WESSEX

On Wednesday 26th September, Gordon Pettitt, L & S.E. Deputy Director, gave an illustrated lecture to members of the Chartered Institute of Transport, at the OCL offices in Southampton, on BR's proposals for electrification of the Branksome-Weymouth main line.

Members were told that it had been largely influenced by the need to replace the Class 491 four-car trailer units, by 1987, the stock having been constructed from BR Mk.1 carriages built originally from steam-hauled stock of the 1950s.

What the Southern envisaged is a fleet of 5-car air-conditioned EMUs based on the Mk.3 stock, and utilising the power bogies of the Class 430 EMUs, running as ten-car expresses from Waterloo to Bournemouth, with buffet facilities, and the leading five-car set going forward from there to Weymouth. The growing population of Poole was recognised by the Southern as a potential 'dividing point', and it may well be that expresses will operate as a ten-car set from Waterloo to Poole. The economics of dispensing with the need to use Class 33/1 diesels beyond Bournemouth is also a factor to be stressed when BR makes its submission to the D.Tp.

Readers of "Modern Railways" will have noted the comments of L & S.E. Director, David Kirby, (in the May 1984 edition) on the above, and also that the Sector has the Farlington/Portcreek Junctions to St. Denys and Eastleigh lines in the 'electrification pipeline' for 1991. It is the remaining diesel 'islands' within the Southern Region areas of Wessex, that are cause for concern with the need to replace the ageing Class 204 and 205 DEMUs likely to be the main influence. This Branch has consistently pressed for the implementation of a through Poole/Bournemouth to Brighton express service, using the Cosham/Farlington cut-off, and thus avoiding the time-consuming detour into, and out of Portsmouth, once electrification of the South Hampshire routes has been completed, and thus emphasising the ridiculous isolation of a new town for those without 24hr a day access to a car. Buses average 40mins. for the 10-mile journey into Bristol, whilst a train could reach Temple Meads in under 20; in directions other than Bristol bus services are very limited or non-existent. Initially, without resources for a frequent DMU service to Bristol, rail would probably have greater impact on longer journeys to the South-West and North, and to London and South Wales via Bristol Parkway. The meeting nevertheless showed a healthy appreciation of the difficulties likely to be encountered - this combination of enthusiasm tempered with realism must surely succeed in getting a station for this new town of over 30,000 people.

Hampshire County Council continue its support for electrification of the remaining diesel-operated lines in Wessex, with Cllr. Mike Roberts pressing the Southern to 'infill' the Ash to Wokingham section of the Guildford-Reading route. Council officers have managed to retain six through workings per day between Portsmouth and Reading (via Eastleigh) in the 1985 timetable and the Liberal Councillor for Hedge End, Mrs. June Watson, is spearheading a campaign for inclusion of an unmanned station and car park on the Fareham/Eastleigh line, (in the Hedge End, West End, and Botley Local Draft Plan) at Hedge End North. The whole area has seen a tremendous growth in population over the past decade, but because of the lack of Park and Ride stations to serve new housing, there has been only marginal growth in local

passenger rail patronage.

Pete Madsen

SEVERNSIDE

In recent months we have received several bits of encouraging rail news, which might go some way to mitigate the gloom surrounding the future of bus services. BR has withdrawn its unwelcome plans to single about nine miles of the Bristol-Westbury route through Bradford-on-Avon. The singling, as part of the West of England resignalling, would have avoided substantial 'one-off' expenditure on track renewal. However, BR now disclose that, due to changed circumstances, it finds that any capital savings would be outweighed in the long run by cost penalties due to the inflexibility imposed on timetable planning and use of rolling stock and train crews. As well as retaining timetable paths for peak DMU services to Freshford and Avoncliff, this decision may allow more Keynsham and Romsey calls by Bristol-Portsmouth trains. We can but hope that BR hereabouts has learnt its lesson from the disruption and inflexibility of previous short-sighted singling schemes. Improving services on this route has repeatedly won more revenue, showing that, as with Salisbury-Exeter, development rather than futile economy is the key to better performance.

The campaign to re-open Yate station (on the Bristol-Gloucester route), long a local RDS objective, moved a stage further when some 50 people crowded into the Parish Hall on the blustery evening of Friday 21st September. After an address by Transport 2000 Deputy Director, Jonathan Roberts, many local residents stood up to put their views, emphasising the ridiculous isolation of a new town for those without 24hr a day access to a car. Buses average 40mins. for the 10-mile journey into Bristol, whilst a train could reach Temple Meads in under 20; in directions other than Bristol bus services are very limited or non-existent. Initially, without resources for a frequent DMU service to Bristol, rail would probably have greater impact on longer journeys to the South-West and North, and to London and South Wales via Bristol Parkway. The meeting nevertheless showed a healthy appreciation of the difficulties likely to be encountered - this combination of enthusiasm tempered with realism must surely succeed in getting a station for this new town of over 30,000 people.

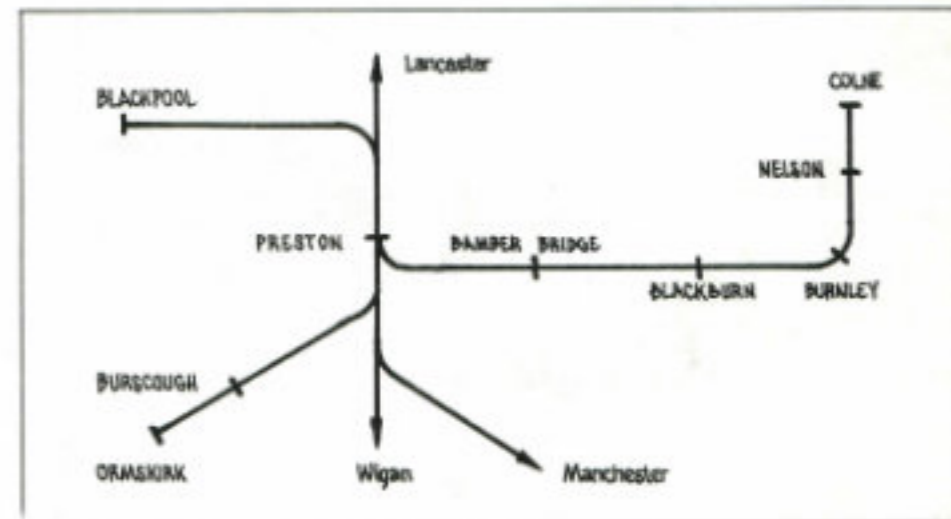
In the wake of suggestions from the local user group, BR proposes (from May 1985) to extend off-peak Severn Beach line DMUs to Weston or Taunton serving stations in Southern Bristol which currently get only a couple of peak-hour trains. The Severn Beach line

itself will gain 2 trains a day (in addition to the two added last year), making a total of 17. It is hoped that BR will take heed of the detail criticisms of the user group, so that this enterprising improvement lives up to its undoubted potential. The two individual proposals above show the need for a comprehensive new look at the options for public transport in the County of Avon. With this in mind, the Branch has taken the initiative in forming a Joint Working Party, initially representing RDS/Avon T.2000/FoE/Severn Beach Line Pass. Assn. to formulate a staged approach to bus-rail integration. It is hoped that research and consultation will point the way to a solution which will make better use of the rail network in Avon, without the massive expenditure which makes the otherwise excellent Avon Metro politically unrealistic.

Jonathan Hummell

NORTH WEST

Our affiliated users' group the Ormskirk to Preston Travellers' Assn. have produced a 4-page document which states the case for re-opening the station at Midge Hall and for the construction of a new halt at Burscough Mill Dam Lane. OPTA estimates that Midge Hall would cost £12,000 to re-open and Burscough £60,000 to construct. Research has shown that there is more demand for a station at Midge Hall than there is at Rufford. The proposals have been considered by all the relevant bodies but as yet no firm commitments have been made. The Association ran a special train from Ormskirk to Windermere on 27th August which was very successful and carried nearly 170 people.



This Branch has recently joined the committee of the North West Electrification Campaign - an alliance of trade unions, political parties and other bodies whose aim is to secure early approval to electrification of the Blackpool to Manchester line and also to persuade the Government to embark on a more comprehensive programme of electrification than the piecemeal approach so

far adopted. To further the campaign the Branch has written to every MP along the line outlining the benefits electrification would bring. The response so far has been encouraging but the real test will come this autumn when BR formally puts its case to the D.Tp.

On the Windermere Branch the newly formed Lakes Line Action Committee is engaged in raising money to improve station facilities at its terminus. BR have already promised to spend £75,000 on the station (rather than the £50,000 originally planned) and to provide a proper waiting room. The Board has said it will match £ for £ any money raised locally to a total of £30,000. This will be used to extend the left-luggage office and the waiting room. So far the Group has raised about £2,500 - £1,000 coming from Windermere Parish Council.

Turning to the "cause celebre" the third objection period for the Settle-Carlisle is now over and the campaign 'looks forward' to the inquiries to come. In order to finance the campaign the Settle-Carlisle Joint Action Committee (RDS, T.2000 and FOSCLA) is forming itself into a limited company and hopes to raise £55,000. The PEIDA report into the line has now been published. This was commissioned by Cumbria County Council in concert with other local authorities. It accuses BR of "WANTON NEGLECT" over its maintenance of the structures along the line and questions the value of the TUCC procedure when BR have so deliberately weighed the case in favour of closure.

(continued below map)

"B.R. can ensure that the horse has bolted before the gate is barred". The most disappointing feature of the whole report however is the section on the Social Cost of closing the line as the COBA analysis makes a lot of questionable assumptions and comes to no positive conclusion. It does nevertheless say that the possible social costs of closure will be high but the Report is all

things to all men - even BR are satisfied with it! In many places it has only scratched the surface and clearly indicates that there is a need for much more detailed research.

Richard Watts

NORTH MIDLANDS

Electrification of the East Coast Main Line is good news for Newark and Retford but we hope the Midland Main Line will not have to wait too long before the catenary is extended from Bedford through to the cities of Derby, Nottingham and Sheffield. This would complement the improvements being made to station buildings. A new travel centre and booking office were installed at Nottingham some time ago; the lifts have recently been rebuilt, and platform buildings are next in line for attention. At Derby, work has started on comprehensive reconstruction of the passenger facilities.

The Nottingham-Lincoln Rail Users' Group has enquired about possible E.E.C. assistance towards the cost of repairs to Rolleston station which serves three villages and Southwell racecourse. Local Authorities have protested that Alfreton & Mansfield Parkway has been unstaffed at certain times of the day, due to staff shortage. This has caused considerable inconvenience to passengers forced to travel ticketless.

The engineering firm of W.H.Davis & Sons, at Langwith Junction, are back in business after going into receivership earlier this year. Their products include freight rolling stock and containers. The factory has retained a rail link despite route re-organisation in recent years. Coal traffic, normally the most important freight in the area, is much reduced because of the miners' strike and some crew's refusal to operate trains from pits that are working. Lorries are moving significant portion of coal that normally goes by rail.

Malcolm Goodall

LINCOLNSHIRE

Following the exploratory meeting reported in our last issue 26 local members meeting in Lincoln on 18th October resolved to form a new Branch of RDS to cover the counties of Lincolnshire & South Humberside. Chairman and Secretary elected at the meeting were Mike Savage and Philip Strong and the Branch's first aim is to press on with production and marketing of a local guide book entitled "Lincolnshire by Rail".

WALES

The future of the Cambrian Coast lines to Aberystwyth and Pwllheli at last seems assured following B.R.'s announcement of a £4.7m. investment package. The three year scheme, to start in

1985, is dependent on financial contributions from Mid Wales Development and local authorities. Operational control of the 135 route miles will be concentrated at Machynlleth, with automation of the remaining manual level crossings and introduction of radio signalling. This will allow operation of a year round Sunday service, presently precluded by the cost of manning numerous crossings and loops. New class 150 DMUs will replace the present ageing fleet, and a daily Inter-City service will leave Aberystwyth for Euston at 07.20, returning at 15.10. At the same time, a £640,000 modernisation plan for the Central Wales line was also announced.

During the summer the Cambrian Coast Line Action Group ran six Sunday Shuttle trains between Barmouth and Pwllheli with the support of Gwynedd County Council. The six Sundays (22nd, 29th July, 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th August) saw 2265 passengers carried.

JWB/CM

SCOTLAND

The Local Branch (RDS-Scotland) wishes to extend an open invitation to any RDS members who may be in Scotland, to visit their office which is situated on the top floor of 113 West Regent Street, Glasgow and is always staffed on Tuesdays.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: It is understood to be a long established rule of the Southern Pacific Railroad (USA) that if two trains meet on a single track neither shall proceed until the other has withdrawn.

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