



Welham Green, one of many re-openings during the ten years since the birth of the RDS

A DECADE OF SUCCESS

RDS, ten years old this month, established as the nationwide independent voluntary body for rail users. It has grown from 498 members, three branches and a handfull of rail users' groups in 1978 to 2000 members, 15 branches and over 70 affiliated users' groups today.

We have grown enough to afford a computer and a part-time paid Administrative Officer - but everyone else working for the Society is an unpaid volunteer. This is part of the Society's strength, for it can speak its mind without fear or favour. It is close to the concerns of ordinary rail users while being able to maintain productive relations with many bodies: management, unions, private firms, local authorities, other voluntary bodies and politicians of all parties.

An encouraging £1700 has also been raised by members in the last eight months towards our Anniversary appeal. Thank you to all who have contributed. It has helped us to finance our campaign for Midland Main Line electrification, our high quality leaflet on Light Rapid Transit, our booklet "A to Z of Rail Reopenings" and "FIGHTING FOR RAIL", a 36 page illustrated book to mark our tenth anniversary.

The book chronicles the history of the Society and its achievements, covering in detail such issues as freight, electrification, the Channel Tunnel and BR finance while setting out developments and policy we should like to see in the next ten years.

FIGHTING FOR RAIL is obtainable from Alan Harwood (address on back page) at £1.80 plus 35p postage.

Ten Years of RDS - see Centre Pages

Who Should Run Our Trains?

This is the question posed by a new RDS leaflet, in response to certain Conservative politicians who have raised the controversial issue of privatisation of BR.

So far these Conservatives have not brought forward a single shred of evidence to prove that a privatised railway would give a better service to users.

Such evidence may be hard to come by and pro-privatisation arguments are based on pure speculation. In every country in Europe, and most in other parts of the world, the railways are mainly or entirely run by the state in the interests of the community as a whole.

Our leaflet examines the possible options suggested by these politicians. The creation of smaller regional companies would almost certainly lead to a fragmentation of the network. Splitting up the National Bus Company has hardly been a resounding success; bus usage declined by 6% in the first year of deregulation.

Selling off the network in its entirety - BR plc - would be the least damaging option, but the proponents of this course do not explain if Government grants for Provincial and Network SouthEast services would continue, or whether there would still be a TUCC structure to protect users.

Of course there is a role for private involvement in railways. Private cash built a new station at Dorchester, many private firms have their own wagons while a Building Society was involved in restoring a through service between Preston and Bradford. This sort of involvement, coupled with input by local authorities and voluntary bodies in a consortium with BR, is the sensible way forward for Settle-Carlisle, for example.

BR has its faults - and RDS will continue to press management for improvements - but we need a coherent national network which, to date, no-one has shown that they can provide better than BR.

10 000 copies of our leaflet have been produced and are available from the General Secretary or the Publicity Officer.

THEY SAY IT DOESN'T PAY

Who Needs the Settle-Carlisle Line?

The answer comes in four parts: local people, long-distance travellers, tourists and freight operators.

In bad Pennine weather, trains are safer and more reliable than road vehicles. That is one reason why local trains were reintroduced on the line in 1986.

The line is important to long-distance travellers as the only reasonable diversionary route when the West Coast Main Line is closed. Usage of the East Coast Main Line is increasing as electrification presses northward, while the West Coast line is already heavily used south of Crewe. A third alternative, using the Midland Main Line and Settle-Carlisle is likely to be more valuable in the future.

Of course, any railway through rugged terrain is relatively costly to maintain and operate. So additional traffic that provides extra revenue should be welcomed. Tourist traffic has grown so much in recent years, with aggressive marketing, that this line now financially outperforms any other BR Provincial service. This is good for regular users and the local economy – for tourism is this country's biggest growth industry. It can create jobs in this area, where there are few alternatives.

Long distance freight is likely to use this route if, as predicted, the Channel Tunnel leads to heavy growth in European freight traffic after 1993. The Settle-Carlisle offers the shortest route from Glasgow to the Continent.

The option of selling off Settle-Carlisle to private enterprise is likely to leave people with no more than an occasional steam train in the summer. If this line closes, lines in the West Country, Wales,

FOR SALE

RDS has obtained a copy of the Lazard Bros. prospectus being sent to those who express an interest in buying the Settle-Carlisle line. As we suspected, any private line would not be properly integrated into the BR network. BR would not allow the private company to run into Leeds, thus knocking on the head any idea of traffic between the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Scotland using the route.

The prospectus also indicates that ammunition traffic to the MOD depot at Warcop, using the northern part of the line, is expected to cease. Presumably this highly dangerous freight will go by road. Why were we not told this in the statement that David Mitchell was given to read to the House of Commons on 16 May

East Anglia, the North and Scotland could be likewise threatened.

Some Government spokesmen have recently been backpedalling, saying that this line is a unique case and not a pointer to what may happen elsewhere. Let us examine their reasoning.

"BR proposed the closure, not the Government". Actually, the Government never proposes closures; it puts BR into a financial position where it is sometimes forced to close lines.

"Ribblehead viaduct is a special case". Wasn't Barmouth bridge also threatened because of high repair costs?

Anti-Closure Fund

At the beginning of September this important RDS fund, financed entirely from members' donations and individual fund-raising efforts, stood at £205. The fund has been depleted by the need to spend money fighting the Settle-Carlisle closure.

Donations, however small or large, are always welcomed by the General Secretary (address on back page).

Settle-Carlisle Petition

A petition form was sent to every member of the Society with the August Railwatch. These forms must be returned by the END OF OCTOBER at latest (not as previously stated) to P. Shaw, 33 Temple Rhydding Drive, Baildon, West Yorks. BD17 5PX.

It is essential to include the address of the signatory on these forms. The inclusion of anything other than signature and address, however, will render the particular sheet invalid.

Wasn't Goole-Gilberdyke? But they were both saved.

"We can't afford to spend public money on lines used by tourists". The PSO grant does not differentiate between tourist and non-tourist use. Why should it, when tourist-generated business benefits local communities?

This line needs to be part of the national rail network, with a regular all-year service subject to the watchdog procedures of the Transport Users' Consultative Committee and run by professional railway workers. Only then can it continue to fulfil its four major roles.

AND WHAT ABOUT THE CONSUMER?

Trevor Jones Visits the 1988 Consumer Congress

I had the privilege of representing RDS nationally at the 1988 Consumer Congress in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in July. As in past years, I attended the all-day Public Transport workshop which, this year, looked at both bus and rail from the point of view of the passenger. The workshop drew up the following resolution, which was subsequently passed by the full congress:

"This Congress believes that an

enforceable code of good practice for the operation and provision of public transport should be developed in order to ensure that public transport meets the needs of all passengers including people with disabilities and to help make public transport work for all members of the public.

A consumer working party will be established by the Consumer Congress to draft a code of good practice. The working party will draw up the code of practice making use of the information generated by and

reports and discussions at the 1988 transport workshop. The working party will consult with all the 1988 workshop participants and other members of the Consumer Congress and other relevant bodies. The working party will present the code to the 1989 Conference for formal adoption by Consumer Congress".

Anyone with any good ideas for inclusion may communicate same to me – short to-the-point type-written letters are more likely to be taken note of than long hand-written examples.

The Editor's View – *But is it Art?*

In recent years travellers on London's buses and tubes have had to contend with a new aspect of urban squalor, imported from the New York subway.

To refer to this blight by the rather overblown Italian word which is normally used to describe it is to elevate its status beyond any deserving. Daubing, soiling, and smearing are words which better express the sordid and infantile nature of the act of disfiguring trains and buses by spray can or felt pen.

What do the practitioners of this alleged art gain by destroying the very public transport on which those who cannot afford to drive, or are debarred using from it by disability, rely?

While this pain in the eyes continues, millions of pounds worth of damage will be done to public transport vehicles each year. London Underground Limited are coping bravely, managing to almost eliminate damage as it occurs – but it is impossible to clean the rolling

stock completely and unsightly ghost smears are ever present.

The question is, what can, or should, RDS be doing about it?

What Bright Spark

Decided to put fares information at the END of BR's talking timetables? Surely most people will not need to listen to the whole of the timetable to find a convenient train, but will almost certainly wish to know the fare.



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

The RDS publication "A-Z of Rail Reopenings" lists 450 rail stations that have been suggested for reopening.

One of these, Arlesey, on the Hitchin-Biggleswade line, is seen under construction. At least 24 more stations are expected during 1988.

International Ticketing and Marketing

When the go-ahead was given for the Channel Tunnel, it was anticipated that BR would begin to make an extra effort to increase their share of international traffic during the years leading up to the projected opening date in 1992. Many rail users from outside London and the Home Counties were hoping that, for them, connections to Continental destinations would become much easier by way of direct services to South Coast ferry ports and simplified through-ticketing arrangements.

This is not to be for the time being, as during correspondence with BR on behalf of the Passenger Committee, it was discovered that from May 1988 international tickets would only be issued from either London or the departure port, with passengers being required to purchase Saver Tickets from their local stations. After further correspondence, it was established that both tickets can be obtained from "principal" BR travel centres. Also, in order to

provide statistics showing the number of passengers who commence their journeys in the provinces, the domestic tickets will indicate the destination to be London International or, presumably, Dover International.

There are, furthermore, continuing doubts as to what is meant by "principal" travel centres. Reports persist of plans to cut the number of centres authorised to issue international tickets (Yorkshire Post 20 January). This is thought to be yet another consequence of sectorised accounting and will, of course, result in longer queues at already busy centres and less business at already quiet ones, thus leading to proposals to close more of the latter – a technique which the Post Office has already developed to a fine art!

Meanwhile, on 4 July, an article in The Independent announced that BR is to cease ticketing and timetabling services for much of the continental rail network, handling only bookings and inquiries

for border-to-border or plum inter-city routes. They will, for example arrange a booking from Paris to Nice but not to Cannes. A BR spokesman denied any threat to European rail harmony, saying that policy would be reviewed when the Tunnel was closer to completion.

The British-based foreign rail operators have said that this action has breached a 1975 accord. RDS, therefore, hopes that SNCF, DB and other operators can persuade BR to change this backward-looking policy as soon as possible.

To commence a programme of marketing and advertising just prior to the opening of the Tunnel may be too late to compete effectively with coach operators, who will, undoubtedly, offer express services to Paris or Brussels via Eurotunnel shuttle trains.

Members are, therefore, asked to write to their MPs, requesting them to urge BR to reverse its retrograde steps.

Mike Breslin

REOPENING IN THE ARDENNES

On the northern edge of the Belgian Ardennes lies Eupen – a town of 17 000 people – comparable in size to Bicester, Wisbech, Dereham or Clitheroe.

Together with certain other smaller places in the extreme east of Belgium, it lost its rail passenger services in the 1950s. When I first visited Eupen, in 1976, the old station building stood forlornly beside a weed-covered track used by occasional freight trains, mainly bringing timber from further south in the high Ardennes.

A return visit this August revealed a transformation. The four-mile branch to Eupen from the Brussels-Cologne main line was reopened in 1984 and a smart new station built. Had this been Britain, chances are that a shuttle service would have run from an unstaffed halt to the main-line junction. The Belgians, however, like most of our EEC partners, spend more per head of population than us. The branch has been electrified and staff at the impressive two-storey

station building sell tickets to anywhere in Belgium (and some places outside it). There are even cycle-hire facilities.

Six Inter-City trains a day work through to Eupen from Ostend, whilst ten local trains a day run to Verviers, the nearest large town and beyond to the resort of Spa. Once the Channel Tunnel is built, Eupen will be just one change of train away from London!

It was also encouraging to see that, as in this country, local voluntary groups sometimes run charter trains on freight-only lines; that which runs south from Eupen is due to have its next excursion on 4 September (a club in the town, sponsored by a local business, chartered a two-hour trip with a ramble, barbecue, raffle and magic show at the other end).

I have written to the organisers conveying the good wishes of RDS for their endeavours.

Trevor Garrod



Just Fancy That

Consultants who helped improve British Airways' tarnished image, before the airline was privatised, have now been hired to improve the railway's.

Guardian

The 15 per cent rise in commuter traffic into London over the past three years was not foreseen by any economists, let alone BR.

Guardian

150 people were killed last year when a new craze for train surfing (riding on the roofs of commuter trains) swept Rio de Janeiro.

Daily Express

Travellers and railmen have been feeding a squirrel which has taken up residence at the end of platforms 12 and 13 at Edinburgh Waverley station.

Scotsman

Britain's Transport Secretary Paul Channon promises that a Common Market decision to abolish national restrictions on lorries from 1992 will not

make a "tuppence of difference" to the level of traffic in Britain.

Guardian

Property deals contributed £263 million to British Rail's £290 million "surplus".

Daily Telegraph

Commuters laid a bomb on the line near Trento in Northern Italy because they were so angry about a decision to close the line. The police said the line was buckled by the blast.

Guardian

Each week a four-kilo case of maggots travels by BR's Red Star Parcel service from Mexborough to Arbroath for local fishermen – that's about a million maggots a year.

Sheffield Gazette

A spot police check on lorries travelling through Cambridgeshire showed that at least half were faulty or illegal. The shock survey results were labelled as "frightening" by a county road safety expert.

Cambridge Evening News

What the

The Need For Change

Britain has the highest commuter fare levels in the world according to the editor of Jane's Urban Transport Systems.

Financial Times

Company car tax concessions are costing £2.3 billion, according to Edinburgh Central MP Alistair Darling. He wants the perks stopped and taxes put on firms' city centre car parks.

Edinburgh Evening News

More than half of all new cars are sold to companies.

Friends of the Earth News

Petrol is cheaper in Britain than anywhere else in Europe even allowing for tourist price concessions offered in some countries.

Bognor Observer

A fatal road accident is now costed at £500 000 by the Department of Transport.

Daily Express

Railway bridges are increasingly at risk from dangerous driving on the roads. Last year there were more than 300 incidents in which road vehicles hit rail bridges.

Times

The Right Way Ahead

Car drivers pay a £3 a month levy in the West German town of Loerrach if they use the vehicle to go to work. It pays for a 30% reduction in fares for people who go by public transport. The town is reportedly cleaner and quieter as a result.

New Cyclist

As an alternative to the company car, the city council of Muenster, West Germany, has bought 50 cycles for its employees to use.

New Cyclist

Rail schemes worth £2.3 billion are being considered by Transport Secretary Paul Channon after a Central London Rail Study report.

Daily Telegraph

A private firm wants to build a £400 million underground railway linking Waterloo to the Isle of Dogs via London Bridge and Surrey Docks.

Daily Telegraph

Plymouth is considering building a £600 million light rail network.

Western Morning News

Southampton is considering a £30 million light rail network.

Daily Telegraph

papers say

Progress

British Rail, for so long the butt of music hall jokes, is in danger of becoming a success story.

Guardian

The line from Portsmouth through Worthing, Brighton, Lewes and Hastings should be improved and the line from Hastings to Ashford should be electrified to give Sussex and Hampshire better access to the Channel Tunnel. The Department of Transport wants to "improve" the A27 coastal road which will either blight hundreds of homes or cut through beautiful virgin downland.

West Sussex Gazette

Cars have been banned from the city centre of Florence because of car pollution and congestion. Buses now run to a proper timetable and come every four minutes.

Guardian

A scheme in Singapore is estimated to have cut traffic by 44 per cent. Cars with fewer than three passengers have to pay for an 80p per day ticket which they must display on the windscreen. Hong Kong meanwhile is planning an electronic scheme which bills the motorist for using the road after "reading" the car numberplate.

Observer

If the Department of Transport wishes to see a modern railway for the 21st century it may have actively to encourage BR to undertake the necessary investment, said the all-party Commons Committee on Transport.

Financial Times

The grant system under section 8 of the 1974 Railways Act must be strengthened if freight is to benefit from the Channel Tunnel, according to a think-tank set up by the Glamorgans and Gwent. It wants a "strategic" terminal at Severn Tunnel Junction, a Freightliner terminal for container traffic at Cardiff, road-rail terminals throughout South Wales and more private sidings.

Western Mail

Fact File

At last a catalogue of library and archive material held by the Society has been produced in order to help members and user groups better research their campaigns.

This 24 page A5 size booklet lists around 750 books, reprints and publications available for loan. Copies from Ray King (address on back page) at £1.50 inclusive of postage.



Graham Collett presents a copy of "Surrey & Sussex by Rail" to Martin Brown, BR Area Manager (Brighton) watched by London & Home Counties Branch Chairman Trevor Jones on 26 August.

IS YOUR RAILGUIDE LIBRARY COMPLETE?

If not, visit a good bookshop or contact the Sales Officer (address on back page).

The thirteen titles available are:-

East Anglia by Rail

Midlands by Rail

Five Shires by Rail

North East by Rail

Kent and East Sussex by Rail

Cheshire and North Wales by Rail

Lancashire and Cumbria by Rail

South West by Rail

Scotland by Rail

Yorkshire by Rail

Thames and Downs by Rail

Wales and the Marches by Rail

Surrey and Sussex by Rail

RDS People

Phil Strong is about to stand down as Lincolnshire Branch secretary, as he will shortly be moving to Sussex. The branch has grown steadily in size and influence since its formation, with Phil as Secretary, in 1984. John Saunders of Stockwell Gate, Whaplode, Spalding, Lincs. PE12 6UE takes over as Acting Secretary until the AGM.

Peter Madsen is the new Wessex Branch Secretary. His address is; Dunedin, Bridge Road, Bursledon, Southampton SO3 8AL (Tel. Bursledon 3277). Dennis

Thody (Wessexford, Upper Woodford, Salisbury, Wilts. SP6 6NU) is Branch Publicity Officer. Jon Honeysett remains as Chairman.

The addresses of new National Executive members are as follows (others can be found in the Members' Handbook):

Helen Broadbent, 92 Hillview Drive, Clarkston, Glasgow G76 7JD.

Chris Burton, 79 Tenison Road, Cambridge, CB1 2BG.

David Sallery, 77 Fford Isa, Prestatyn, Clwyd, LL19 8DY.

***** RDS YEAR BY YEAR *****

1978

RDS formed from RIS and RDA
RDS publishes first "Guide for Rail Users Groups"

1979

First "Railway Development News" produced in A5 format
"Your Local Trains in the '80s" published

1980

First National Conference of Rail Users' Groups organised by RDS
BR adopts "This is the Age of the Train" slogan
R.V. Banks meets Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport
Tyne and Wear Metro opens
Barmouth Viaduct under threat
RDS publishes "Railfreight or Juggernaut?"

1981

Woodhead Route Closes
Robert Aickman, RDS Vice-President, dies
GLC "Fares Fair" Policy introduced - 25% cuts
Speller amendment, allowing experimental reopenings, passed by Parliament
Supplement to "Your Local Trains in the 80's" published

1982

Rail Strikes
Dr Caton appointed Chairman; Mr Banks appointed first President of RDS
East Anglia Branch Tenth Anniversary
Mr Banks dies
"How to fight a Rail Cut" published
First "Rail Development Week" held

1983

SERPELL Report (proposing major cutbacks in rail system) published
Petition (with 25,000 signatures) against any further rail closures, presented to 10 Downing St.
"Railway Development News" changed to A4 format
First station to benefit from "Speller Act" (Pinhoe, Devon) reopened experimentally
BR proposes singling of several sections of double-track routes to save money
"Bring Back the Trains" published

1984

Railways into Roads (Sir Alfred Sherman) study published
Sir John Betjeman (RDS Vice-President) dies
East Coast Main Line Electrification scheme approved
RDS Conference "Transportation in Metropolitan Areas"
Settle-Carlisle, Goole-Gilberdyke, and Stratford-Tottenham Hale Closure Notices published
BR abandon proposal to single part of the Ipswich-Norwich Main Line
"A Voice for Rail Users" published
BR/County Councils Association "Review of Rural Railways" published
First RDS Railguide published

1985

Goole-Gilberdyke reprieved
First issue of "RAILWATCH" published
Deregulation of Bus Services implemented

1986

British and French Prime Ministers announce go-ahead for rail-based Channel Tunnel
Marylebone and lines to Harrow and Northolt Junction reprieved BR abandon plans to close Reedham-Yarmouth line
Dornoch Rail Bridge scheme abandoned
Alan Bevan elected Chairman; Dr Caton appointed President
Society electrification campaign launched

1987

RDS sets up South London Line Users' Group
Docklands Light Railway opens

1988

"A-Z of Rail Re-openings" published
13th Railguide published
Channel Tunnel in progress
East coast electrification continues
RDS Grows from strength to strength
2000th member enrolled?
"Fighting for Rail" Published

FULFILL



Roland Victor Banks
RDS, is commemorated by
plaque shown right, at Be...

ING THE BANKS DREAM



anks, the founder of the
y a seat, which bears the
stead station.

It would be inexcusable to launch our Tenth Anniversary issue without mention of our Founder and First President, the late Roland Victor Banks.

Having joined the Railway Invigoration Society in 1960 he acted as its Press Officer, becoming Chairman in 1975. He was largely responsible for implementing the merger between that organisation and the two areas of the Railway Development Association which led to the birth of the RDS just ten years ago. He continued to act as Press Officer for the new organisation virtually until his death in May 1982.

At the time of his death the Society's main goal was to reach a membership of 1000 – now the figure stands at nearly twice that.

As a former Electrical Engineer, railway

electrification on the scale envisaged by the 1981 BR/D.Tp joint review was another of his major goals, as was the construction of a rail-based Channel Tunnel. Whilst the latter is now in sight, the present Government seem too obsessed with Privatisation to give the merits of large-scale electrification the consideration they deserve.

How then do we match up to the Banks dream after ten years – and how will we fare in the next ten? There is no doubt that the Society will have plenty to keep it occupied well into the 21st century unless – like Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus – politicians of all parties see the blinding light of reality and the real potential for a properly developed railway system as an integral part of a truly European network.

John Barfield

Members of the Channel Tunnel Association congratulate the RDS on reaching its tenth Anniversary.

Although it is only a small group of enthusiasts, the Channel Tunnel Association is now 25 years old and exists to help study all aspects of the Tunnel.

It welcomes new members (subscription £5), particularly those whose interests include the new services through the Tunnel.

For details send SAE to: 44 Westbourne Terrace, London W2 3UH.



A DECADE OF SUCCESS



Counting the Cost

Dear Sir,

I cannot agree with Michael R. Barrett (RW36) that railways should be run on a narrowly commercial basis.

Whilst it is undoubtedly true that competition between rail and road would be fairer if railway infrastructure was funded on the same basis as road investment, this would not, by itself, tackle the more subtle question of "externalities" such as pollution, noise or visual impact.

Why? Mainly because it is impracticable to put a financial value on, say, a listed building or quieter urban environment. Running railways solely on a commercial basis assumes that fares paid by users reflect the external benefits (and costs) of the railway as a form of transport. In practice they do not.

Also, I have not yet seen any workable method of running roads and private road transport as some kind of commercial activity. Nobody makes a profit on their car - they have to go to work in order to earn money to pay for it. In effect, therefore, cars are a "private service", not a commercial activity. Why should railways be subject to much more stringent commercial criteria?

There is one further snag to the balance sheet approach to life. That is that, ultimately, nothing has any intrinsic value. It would be quite possible to make a financial case for putting a motorway through the grounds of Buckingham Palace, or mining copper in Snowdonia, but the environmental costs would be huge.

Running railways efficiently is something we should all aim for - but only after these more fundamental questions surrounding transport policy have been considered.

Yours faithfully,

Philip Bisatt,
Shirley,
Southampton

Road Wars

Dear Sir,

I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity of travelling, by rail, to many parts of our lovely planet, both east and west.

From the Canadian Pacific to the railways of the Soviet Union (and of many other countries too numerous to mention) this mode of transport is, in my opinion, vastly superior to all the others. I get sick in planes and ships and I am afraid of road afraid travel!

When I consider the ghastly "Road War" in this country alone, it's maimed and slaughtered victims, it seems to me

insane that the Government cannot be forced to stop this daily carnage by forced doing the only sane thing: adequately finance the upkeep and expansion of the country's railways while taking the money from the road lobby crew who cause all the carnage - the dead and the broken bodies - and make the punishment fit the crime for all motorists (speeding, drunk or whatever) who go on killing and maiming on the roads of Britain every single day.

Elizabeth Fulton

Passive Choking

Dear Sir,

Whilst I would take issue with Mrs Mellish (RW 36) that the risks of passive smoking are "well established", I do agree that smoking and non-smoking areas on trains should be kept separate as far as possible.

As a smoker I much prefer to be in a totally smoker-occupied carriage away from the disapproving looks of anti-smokers (as opposed to non-smokers). Besides which, I don't like to see people looking so worried; they really should try to relax more and enjoy life!

Yours faithfully,

David Bruck,
Hornchurch,
Essex

(I find it impossible to "relax and enjoy life" in a train where I am forced to feel nauseous by other people's smoke fumes. One third of all deaths are due to smoking-related diseases; there is no significant cause of lung cancer other than cigarette smoking. Under these circumstances it is questionable whether smoking can be tolerated on public transport at all. I, for one, would support a total ban - the London Underground is a much nicer place to be since the GLC banned smoking. ED)

Chunnel

Dear Sir,

RDS members may recollect that, when the question of a fixed channel link was considered earlier in the 1980's, the Thatcher administration insisted that the link should be a drive-through facility for cars, buses and lorries. The successful "Eurotunnel" rail scheme was chosen on condition that the promoters should bring forth plans for a drive-through road tunnel by the year 2000. But extra tunnels would be built only if the capacity of that now under construction proved inadequate. The Eurotunnel Chairman, Mr Alistair Morton, said in a conference in June 1987 that extra tunnels would probably be for another rail link. "But it could be a road

tunnel if the British and French railways failed to seize their opportunities", he added. Obviously, "seizing opportunities" means extending the IUC gauge Ligne a Grand Vitesse from the Tunnel to London and beyond.

Whatever transport mode is adopted for the tunnel, that form of transport will dictate British transport policy from 1993 onwards, and all genuine environmentalists should welcome the rail mode. I very much suspect, however, that the British Road federation will put a lot of pressure on Eurotunnel to bring forward road tunnel plans. In such an event what can our society do? Out of 112, 138 individual shareholders; only 35 are known to be RDS members!

I have suggested to the General Secretary that RDS Eurotunnel shareholders might consider forming some sort of monitoring group (not a ginger group, a negotiating body - the RDS already has a satisfactory negotiating relationship with the Eurotunnel company). This group could carry out research, discuss lines of argument and give courage and support to a Group member willing to articulate the RDS case at Company meetings. Besides a drive-through tunnel there may be many other problems the Group will have to deal with.

Yours sincerely,

Nicholas Hammond,
Huntingdon,
Cambridgeshire.

Channel Freight Links

Dear Sir,

The Channel Tunnel will result in more freight being carried by London's orbital railways. The North London Line, already a busy freight route, will become the sole link between the Tunnel and East Anglia. Clearly, an outer orbital freight route will be desirable by the turn of the century.

Reopening between Bedford and Sandy would provide a useful link between the East Coast Main Line and the West Country, but the need for a lengthy detour via Hitchin would lessen the importance of such a line as an East Anglia - West Country artery.

Ideally, the whole ex-LNWR Bedford-Cambridge route would be reopened, but the presence of a radio telescope on the trackbed near Lord's Bridge would make this impracticable - a railway passing anywhere near this precision instrument would meet with considerable opposition.

It might be possible to build a new line, of comparable length to the old LNWR railway, from the Bedford-Bletchley

route to the Hitchin-Cambridge line. Such a railway might start at Ridgmont, running along the ridge of high ground to Baldock. A connection with the East Coast Main Line could be provided at Arlesey and one with the Midland in the Amphill area. The latter, with new stations on the main line at Stewartby and Kempston Hardwick, would allow the Ridgmont-Bedford section to be closed.

Yours faithfully,

C. Mather,
London NW6

North and South

Dear Sir,
After reading your June issue of "In Parliament", I feel I must take issue with Attlee, and his comments regarding objections to the Channel Tunnel.

For it is not, I believe, primarily the threats of rabies, terrorists and "invading hordes" which cause people to be opposed to this form of Euro-link. Rather it is a very real concern that the Chunnel will help the South, already the most prosperous part of the country, to the detriment of the North.

I remember a French master at my school in North Warwickshire pointing out this line of thinking some fourteen years ago, before unemployment and the decline in manufacturing industry had hit the region to the extent which they were to do later. I find his argument even more valid in the late 1980s.

So, though I can understand why those in the pro-rail lobby support the Channel Tunnel, I personally am an opponent. And I'm pretty sure I'm not the only supporter of the railways who thinks on these lines.

Yours faithfully,

Tim Mickleburgh,
Hebden Bridge,
West Yorkshire

Coastway Competition

Dear Sir,
Up until now the deregulated bus operators have made little attempt to compete with BR, preferring to compete with each other. I fear that this may be about to change, especially as bus operation is showing signs of settling down to an "8 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays only" pattern (albeit with quite good frequencies, especially when competitive services are taken into account). Following the "bus wars", some of the participants have retired hurt and will be looking for other fields.

Brighton Buses (municipal) and Brighton and Hove Bus Company (ex-

NBC) have introduced a new hourly joint service between Brighton and Eastbourne, seven days a week, including evenings. This is definitely stated, by management, as being targeted at BR's "Coastway East" service. Many people find the change at Lewes, necessary on many trains between Brighton and Eastbourne, inconvenient. A particular point about the new bus service is that many railcards entitle the holder to travel at half fare (single or return) after 9 a.m. Mondays to Fridays and at weekends.

In cases like these, bus operators have their eyes on the long-term prize - abstraction of sufficient rail traffic to bring about service reductions, consequent further traffic falls and, ultimately, withdrawal of the rail service.

I notice the new bus route follows the coast more closely than the railway, serving neither Newhaven nor Seaford to the south, nor Lewes to the north. These buses leave Brighton at 30 minutes past the hour, taking 50 minutes for the through journey. The train leaves Brighton for Seaford at 35 minutes past, reaching Lewes at ten to the hour, when passengers for Eastbourne have just three minutes to dash along the platform, up the stairs, across the bridge and down the stairs to catch the 53 minutes past which has just come from Victoria. If they miss it they then have to wait until the next train at 10 past (this train being the 55 past from Brighton which they might as well have waited for and avoided changing. To miss the connection by a whisker is the most frustrating of all for those who have to

make their way back over the footbridge and stairs.

Assuming that BR cannot alter the service by diverting the 15 minutes past to run to Seaford and providing a shuttle service thence to Lewes, there could be a case for adopting the Swiss system whereby the station inspector, not the guard, gives the right away. The inspector could more easily satisfy himself that there were no stragglers off the Brighton train before giving the right away.

Yours faithfully,

S.R. Allchin,
Bognor Regis,
Sussex

Bustitution

Dear Sir,
Since bus deregulation got well under way, there have been occasional news items, especially in the transport press, suggesting that BR, especially the Provincial and Network SouthEast sectors, have enjoyed an unfair advantage over the bus operators, and this has enabled them to hold down fares and maintain services at (or even above) pre-bus-deregulation level. Sometimes these comments include a hint that BR's ownership and control of its own exclusive right of way gives it too great an advantage over the buses!

At the time when the predecessors of the RDS were established, it was often difficult to deny the fact that buses did often provide a cheaper and more frequent alternative to aging steam trains, especially for distances of less than about fifteen miles. There was little traffic congestion, most buses were crew-operated and schedules could be reliably maintained.

I strongly suspect that the Department of Transport is desperately searching for a way to handicap BR - I am sure it would like to find a way to restrict the issue of railcards which, for many card holders, always make rail cheaper than bus. One-person bus working, together with traffic congestion and the need of buses to penetrate town centres without using ring roads and bypasses, has played havoc with schedules.

When "bustitution" is mentioned, reference is made to "guaranteed bus services". But nobody has yet explained how a rail replacement bus can be "guaranteed" an assured passage through congested approach roads and town centre streets.

Yours faithfully,

S.R. Allchin,
Bognor Regis,
West Sussex

Editor's Note

In Railwatch 36 we published a letter from Mr M Barrett of Chippenham, in which he stated that the RDS Freight Committee was unable to help very much being constrained by the article in its constitution which prevents private capital etc. We should like to point out that there is nothing in the RDS constitution which opposes private investment in the railways (indeed we support many constructive developments such as privately owned freight wagons) - we are opposed to privatisation of all or part of the RAILWAY NETWORK ITSELF.

It is, of course, open to any member to change this article in the constitution by obtaining majority support for a motion to this effect at the Society's AGM. This was pointed out to Mr Barrett during protracted correspondence with Mr Wilkinson of the Freight Committee, but no such motion was proposed at this year's meeting.

When Noise Annoys

Dear Mr Willson,

The letter from Joy Billington Dory (RW36) complains: "the use of radios by many young louts ought to be stamped out".

Passengers suffering from this offence are entitled to require the Guard to enforce BR Bye-law 22/1, which provides protection against such nuisance.

Moreover, in February, the national press reported that David Mitchell, then the Transport Minister, intended revised regulations about behaviour on public transport to be operative from April. The maximum fine of £400 was mentioned specifically for players of "ghetto-blasters". Representations to the Department of Transport were made by Robert Hughes MP (Harrow West) whose constituents pressed for action to eradicate noise problems in confined public transport spaces.

Yours sincerely,

G.S. Angell,
Kidderminster,
Worcs.

Minister to be suspended over Settle-Carlisle?

Dear Editor,

I am a retired 68 year old BR supervisor who, throughout my adult life, have opposed hanging, believing it to be a barbarous outdated practice.

If the Minister responsible for the closure of the Settle-Carlisle Railway would like to be the first victim I would happily change my attitude and if it was done in public would joyfully book a seat.

Yours faithfully,

J Cowperthwaite,
Banbury,
Oxon.

NOTES FOR CONTRIBUTORS

The Editor is always pleased to receive letters and articles for possible publication in RAILWATCH. Length should be kept to a minimum. Copy may be submitted on disc using the majority of word processing packages (which saves time when sub-editing), but handwritten and typed contributions are equally welcome.

Photographs should be good quality black and white or colour PRINTS (not slides).

Material may be shortened or otherwise edited while retaining the sense of the original. Opinions expressed by contributors are not necessarily those of the Editor, the Editorial Board or the Society.

SCOTLAND

The Scottish Branch wrote to all local authorities in Scotland, appealing to them to give financial support and/or affiliate to RDS. So far, fifteen have done so. Although the actual cash received from each is relatively small, the Branch can now claim to speak for many more people.

The Branch has, as a preliminary move before the Euro elections in June 1989, written to all political parties in Scotland. The parties have been given some ideas for their manifestos and have been asked for specific pledges for rail users. In particular they have been requested to state categorically that they will oppose both the imposition of VAT and the introduction of heavier lorries on to our roads. If these have to be accepted in the name of harmonisation then, by the same token, it is vital that Britain fall into line with the rest of Europe in the manner in which railways are financed. The branch has also asked that the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee of the EEC (that member states should take into account the energy, environmental and safety advantages of rail in their transport policies) should be converted into a directive as soon as possible. We have pointed out that our Government is actually pursuing diametrically opposed policies.

In short, the Branch has given notice that railways and the environment will be major issues at the hustings next June. It is interesting to speculate whether there is any connection between the sacking of E.C. Commissioner Stanley Clinton Davis by Mrs Thatcher and his much-publicised pro-rail views.

Douglas G. Smart

MERSEYSIDE

A new station has opened at Overpool on the Hooton-Helsby line, situated between Little Sutton and Ellesmere Port. Plans are also well advanced for a station between Hamilton Square and Birkenhead Park on Merseyrail's Wirral Line. It will be called Conway Park.

The local press has recently been carrying further letters from rail users on our favourite topic of overcrowding. The service that is receiving most criticism appears to be the North Trans-Pennine to Scarborough, which is operated by Class 150/2 Sprinters. It is widely accepted that these units are not entirely suitable for journeys of such length and it is, therefore, hoped that the problem will be alleviated in 1989 when the Class 158s enter service. We shall see!

Another recent complaint emanating from travellers on Merseyside is the continuing absence of a through train

from Glasgow or Edinburgh. The service was withdrawn in 1986, which infuriated many passengers who have found that, although there is now an hourly service between Liverpool Lime Street and Preston, it is operated by totally unsuitable Class 142 Pacers. Moreover, it is difficult to find seats on the connecting InterCity service. BR are showing little interest in restoring the through trains, for reasons known only to themselves, and it will take a lot of persuasion for them to reconsider the matter. InterCity Sector realised the error of their ways when they axed the West Country service from Liverpool, so it may not be too difficult.

It is to be hoped that the Department of Transport will soon give the go-ahead for the Hooton-Chester/Ellesmere Port electrification and it is, indeed, possible that an announcement will have been made by the time this issue reaches the membership. It seems that Merseyside PTE have hinted that, once this project is complete, they may give consideration to providing support for the northern section of the Wrexham-Bidston line. Although electrification would be a somewhat long-term project, a new station might be in the pipeline at Woodchurch.

Finally, plans have been announced for an £18 million resurrection of the Liverpool Overhead Railway, to provide a riverfront tourist link between Sandhills and the Festival Garden site.

Mike Breslin

WALES

Several reliefs have been added to the North Wales Coast timetable and the line now boasts its best all-day service for many years. With Welsh railway services now having a high profile it is to be hoped that the programme of improvements will continue and that there will be a further fares promotion in the autumn.

Freightliner carryings continue at a high level with four trains daily in each direction on the Holyhead line. New timber traffic to Llandudno commenced on 1 June while, by 18 June, 1110 wagons had been handled in connection with the A55 Expressway construction. Sites for 12 potential Channel Tunnel freight terminals have been earmarked in South Wales by the Standing Conference on Regional Policy.

BR ran two steam trips Crewe-Chester-Shrewsbury-Crewe on 21 August. RDS had a sales stand on both trips. It is hoped that steam will return to the Crewe-Holyhead line in the summer of 1989; subject to local authority financial support, a reversing triangle will be provided at Valley. RDS Wales feels that steam trips will help to focus public

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attention on the North Wales Coast line, rather than improvements to the A55.

BR Wales Manager John Davies has unveiled a scheme for the replacement of old DMUs west of Swansea by a fleet of 15 Class 156 single-car Sprinters. Such investment should secure these lines far into the future. Mid and South Glamorgan Councils have proposed a £2.1 million scheme for a passenger service to Tondy. Glamorgan Rail Users' Federation have unveiled an imaginative plan for two new rail lines and fifteen new stations in the Cardiff Docklands area.

Construction of the new Holyhead station should commence shortly and should be completed within eighteen months. Local authority investment in Bangor station has seen the construction of a new waiting shelter, while a proposed new station for Llanrwst has reached the planning stage.

RDS Wales has just issued a report on the proposed construction of two new curves at Shotton between the Wrexham-Bidston and Crewe-Holyhead lines. New passenger services are envisaged from Birkenhead to Llandudno and Chester. Adoption of this scheme by Clwyd and Cheshire County Councils is hoped for. An ambitious plan for a rail tunnel from Prestatyn to Meols (Wirral) seems doomed to failure, owing to lack of Government finance. The £400 million scheme was proposed by Kent-based Integrated Transport Limited.

BR are reviewing the safety of open level crossings in Mid Wales. There have been numerous incidents involving car drivers who have ignored red signals. In one recent court case the motorist was given an absolute discharge - he claimed he thought the lights had "jammed on"!

In connection with the tenth anniversary of the RDS a public meeting has been arranged for 22 October in Rhyl, Clwyd. It will be held at St Thomas Church Hall, Russell Road, at 2.00 p.m. Addressing the meeting will be Beata Brookes, MEP for North Wales, and Andrew McFarlane of the RDS National Executive. It is hoped also to discuss the prospect of Crewe-Holyhead electrification.

Dave Sallery

YORKSHIRE

With the commencement of electric services on the East Coast Main Line from King's Cross to Leeds in October, electrification (or the lack of it) is a topical subject in West Yorkshire. Inter-City trains continuing from Bradford to Leeds will be loco-hauled along the Aire Valley to Bradford Forster Square station, thus avoiding the formidable gradients between Leeds and Bradford

Interchange. Plans are being drawn up to electrify the line from Leeds to Skipton, Ilkley and Bradford.

Bradford Interchange station, long considered a white elephant, might close if an expanded Forster Square station is successful. The Interchange station is said to be losing £2 million a year. The 140 year old cross-Bradford rail scheme is threatened by the Government's Property Services Agency which plans to build a court house on the site of the old Exchange station right on the line of the suggested rail link. The Midland Railway won parliamentary approval for this link on five different occasions between 1898 and 1911.

Huddersfield station, a listed building, is to receive a facelift costing £1 million. Outwood station, near Wakefield, opened in July, 28 years after the former station closed. This is the fifth station to reopen in West Yorkshire in just over a year. Meanwhile, Altofts station, near Normanton, is again up for closure; so is Melton Halt between Brough and Hull. The Hull avoiding line, which bypasses Paragon station, is also threatened with closure.

In South Yorkshire approval has been given for Rotherham Masborough to close and for the Swinton Curve to be reinstated. This would cut out the awkward scissor crossing at Aldwarke Junction and the very sharp curve west of Mexborough station.

Denis Bradbury

NORTH EAST

Following the publication of "A-Z of Rail Reopenings", the North-East Branch has been studying local reopening schemes mentioned in the book. Our feeling is that the Branch's limited resources would best be concentrated on a limited number of schemes; a new station at Horden and a reopened passenger rail link to Ashington have most potential.

On 17 May, Branch Chairman John Bourn met BR's local Provincial Services Manager, Don Jary, at Newcastle to discuss these matters. Mr Jary pointed out that, as with most reopenings, external capital would be required. Horden is seen as having potential but Ashington is more problematic; there are pathing problems on the single line and a fast and frequent Ashington-Newcastle bus service.

The Branch will now investigate the current financial rules for reintroducing passenger services on freight lines before deciding on its next step. Meanwhile, the campaign received a fillip on 12 May when the Newcastle Evening Chronicle published a major feature entitled "Let's Back Track", putting the

case for rail reopenings, based on our book and an interview with the Branch Chairman.

The summer timetable included extra trains for Morpeth and Chester-le-Street, a much better Newcastle-Carlisle Sunday service and, most excitingly, summer Sunday passenger trains over the freight-only Eastgate branch to Stanhope. This bold initiative, underwritten by Durham deserves to prosper. We hope members have taken the opportunity to ride to this attractive town. The whole enterprise represents a bold effort by BR and the local council to open up a lovely but largely unexplored dale to more visitors.

Mr Harold Atkinson, the Branch's Acting Secretary, wishes to step down at the end of the year. Is another member willing to take on this job which, as a minimum, involves typing correspondence and distributing copies of Rail Tyne-Trent? The Branch can only remain active if more members are prepared to come forward to assist in its activities.

With Privatisation much in the news, a letter from the Branch Chairman in the Newcastle Evening Chronicle on 26 June set out the RDS viewpoint. We have also written to two local Conservative MPs seeking their views on the future of rural lines in their constituencies. Alan Amos (Hexham), whose constituency includes much of the Tyne Valley line from Newcastle to Carlisle and who declares himself to be "...a firm supporter of the railway network..." stated that he could see merit in the idea of privatisation but agreed that "...full and clear guarantees would have to be given regarding the future of rural services". He also indicated his support for retention of Settle-Carlisle as an operational railway. Michael Shaw (Scarborough), whose constituency embraces part of the Middlesborough-Whitby line merely said that he would continue to support the continuance of the Esk Valley line. We are writing to him for clarification of this somewhat ambiguous statement.

John Bourn

MIDLANDS

Work still goes on despite the quiet holiday months. The branch has just published its Bedfordshire report, the production of which was a long-drawn-out process which haunted many members, the rejection of the Bedford-Sandy proposal being our biggest headache. Our reply to the County Council's Northamptonshire rail draft plan seems to have caused less controversy.

We are expanding our links with unions and Chambers of Commerce as work continues on the Midland Main Line

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proposals. A Branch member is to address a business lunch in Chesterfield – an excellent way of improving our image in the eyes of a sector which might have influence with the Government. We continue to press for local stations on the Midland Main Line and are also working, with the Parish Council, for the reopening of Croft, on the Leicester-Birmingham line. We are, as I write, trying to set up a meeting with BR over the Birmingham-Norwich line and the changes it has seen since May this year.

As the local representative in Leicestershire, I would welcome any comment, especially on the Coventry-Nottingham service, at 4 Linden Avenue, Countesthorpe, Leicester (Tel. 0533 772990).

Darryl Taylor-Smith

LONDON AND HOME COUNTIES

The Branch's second guide book, "Surrey and Sussex by Rail", was formally launched by the presentation of a copy to the BR Area Manager (Brighton) on his station main concourse on the morning of Friday 26 August. Although eighteen local and six national papers, together with local radio and TV, had been invited via a press release, none turned up. It is hoped, nevertheless, that the new contacts made with BR through the event will be mutually useful.

The South London Line Travellers' Association (SoLLTA) wrote to the BR South-Central Network Manager at Waterloo concerning the 50% service cuts (due to staff shortages) on this line. Whilst we can understand BR's desire to hit the least used (and least profitable) of its commuter services, the whole situation is clearly regrettable and presumably reflects the low rates of pay.

EAST ANGLIA

The RDS 10th Anniversary was to be celebrated in Norwich on 1 October with a well-attended Branch Meeting addressed by Mr. D.E. McKewan M. Inst.T.A., who was to discuss their views on future rail development in East Anglia. Our next Branch Meeting is planned for Cambridge on Saturday 26 November with guest speaker Mr. J.B.K. Flaxman, Chairman of the Eastern England TUCC.

Road traffic in the City of Norwich grew by 10% between 1983 and 1987. City and County Traffic Planners are seeking a solution to the ever-increasing volume of traffic but will not look at rail alternatives because the official view is that the Norfolk rail network is already a drain on County resources.

The light rail system suggested for

Norwich city has been dismissed, apart from a single route from Sweet Briar (A47)-City-Harford Bridge. In the Branch view this short route would not be practicable unless it were extended westward to Taverham (Thorpe Marriot) via the M&GN track bed, where there is greater passenger potential from the new housing estate.

Good news for travellers at Diss. £155 000 is to be spent on refurbishing the station and extra car parking.

The new Sizewell Railhead commenced operation at the end of August. This will reduce lorry movements to and from the new Nuclear Power Station under construction.

The East Suffolk line will see the first loco-hauled passenger train on 22 October since the introduction of radio signalling. This will be a North East Norfolk Travellers' Association Special to Portsmouth.

BOOKSHELF The Railway Station, A Social History

Jeffrey Richards and John M. MacKenzie. Oxford University Press. Paperback 440 pages inc. B&W Photographs £5.95. Also available in hardback. ISBN 0-19-285201-9.

Every possible aspect of the railway station is covered in this brave work; the station in literature from Awdrey to Zola, the station in postcard, poster and film, the station's role in profligating class, racial and sexual distinctions (Imperial Russia had five classes of travel, while India under the British Raj had to contend with not only four classes of travel but also with racial segregation and the provision of separate catering for vegetarians and omnivores), the sociology of the railway traveller, the authoritarian attitude of the railway companies to their employees and the pride and tradition of railway work and railway families are all described.

The expected approach to the station, the architectural, is crammed into three chapters covering Britain, Europe and

the rest of the world. Analogies are drawn with cathedrals, town houses, temples, airports. The authors are not afraid of anything. They consider, for example, the psychology of the almighty militaristic railway builders who built the Doric arch at Euston as a triumphant monument to their final conquest of the capital, and its subsequent wanton destruction by a BR management in tune with the sixties philistine attitude to both railways and the urban environment. Hitler's plans for a Third Reich capital served by two massive railway termini make surprising reading and remind us that the railway was once seen as much a symbol of power as the motor car is today.

There is something for everyone in this book. For RDS campaigners there is much information on the decline of the railway systems of the world and its profound social impact and facts taken for granted by RDS, such as the decline of rural communities linked with the loss of trains, are confirmed.

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