

Railwatch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

NO 54

DECEMBER 1992

90p

Going at full tilt

This is the X2000 tilting train that has been persuading people in Sweden to switch from air and road back to rail.

Throughout the harsh snowswept Swedish winter, it has been operating between Stockholm and Gothenburg with 99 per cent reliability and cutting the five hour journey down to three.

International trainmakers ABB were hopeful that Richard Branson's Virgin group might buy the 130mph X2000 for Britain's winding InterCity routes.

But a Virgin spokesman said the Government's privatisation plans had delayed hopes of running any services, let alone buying new equipment.

The chances of operating anything like the tilting train were now "way in the future".

The spokesman said: "We didn't need privatisation. We were prepared to run in co-operation with British Rail."

Meanwhile the Americans are so impressed by the X2000 they are testing one on their North East corridor between New York and Boston.

The train has already been tested on Deutsche Bundesbahn and in future may be used on German regional services, which in Britain are "graced" by two-car 158 Sprinters.

Britain of course abandoned tilting trains after prototype APTs were built for operation on the West Coast Main Line.

There may have been other faults in this high-tech train than spilling coffee into journalists' laps but now other countries have proved that tilting train technology can be made to work - and can be sold around the world.

Our Government prefers to trumpet the strength of the great car economy despite the fact that the value of cars imported into Britain exceeds exports.

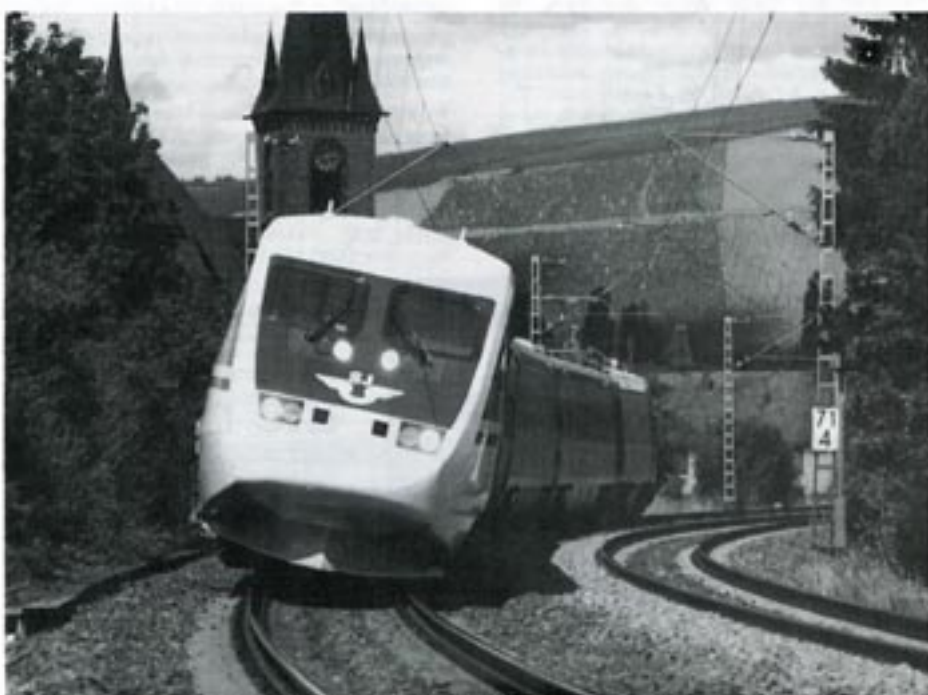
The reality is that the future belongs to the train. In Britain though, trainmakers are facing a bleak future as the Government which wastes billions of pounds on building more roads is starving the rail system of the investment it needs merely to keep going.

The railways need £1½ billion to implement the most important projects and to keep present services running properly.

After the Networkers for Kent Link are delivered, British train builders have few orders even though BR needs new trains.

The Networkers of course quickly pay for themselves by being more efficient.

But the Government is refusing to allow BR to order Networkers for the Kent Coast services.



On test in Germany's Saarland: But the X2000 won't be coming here.

Photo: ABB

Even exceptionally cost-effective and socially desirable projects like Thameslink 2000 which would cost £300 million, are on hold - thanks to the Government.

The result is that the only tenders up for grabs in Britain at the moment are for 20 Sprinter trains for Strathclyde.

Meanwhile the road lobby laughed all the way to the bank as they heard Transport Secretary John MacGregor wax lyrical about the environmental benefits of building new roads! He claimed they would also benefit "passengers" before boasting of spending £4½ billion on roads this year in England alone.

"We seem to be opening bypasses each month," he told the Tory party conference.

He gave a long-term commitment to a substantial road building programme. But at least there was laughter and applause at the Brighton conference for one man with more sensible views.

BR supervisor Mike Hughes from Arundel said: "It is embarrassing to hear MPs screaming about subsidies for railways but applauding subsidies, sorry I mean investment, for the roads." He rightly pointed out that there is one rule for the road and a different one for rail-

ways. Delegate Quentin Langley from Woking also challenged the present "policy" and called for greater use of public transport, green routes for bikes and buses and road pricing "to set London free".

Later in the debate, Mr MacGregor made the surprising claim that Tory policies produce an efficient, modern transport system.

He also criticised Labour Transport spokesman John Prescott's grammar.

Later Mr MacGregor said he cared deeply about the environment and claimed to be taking steps to deal with atmospheric pollution "with CO2 and all that sort of thing".

Turning to his privatisation plans, he said BR would not be allowed to bid for any franchises. The prospect therefore is that InterCity will bleed to death while others pick the ripe cherries. At present, if Virgin wants to take one of InterCity's "slots" to Edinburgh, it has to compensate BR for lack of revenue.

Once the Bill goes through Parliament, InterCity - the only organisation in Britain with experience in running high-speed rail services - will be fighting with both hands tied behind its back. It and the people who work for it deserve a better deal.

Your society needs you!

The workload inside the Railway Development Society is increasing all the time, particularly with the added complications of the Government's privatisation plans.

So from April, the society intends to appoint two administrative assistants, in addition to the two administrative officers we already have.

Admin assistant one will service the parliamentary liaison committee and possibly the international and EC committee. The work will involve arranging and minuting meetings, typing, printing and despatch of reports, including sending Railwatch to MPs and MEPs, and some liaison work with the politicians as well as their secretaries and researchers. The committees each meet four or five times a year, usually in London, Peterborough or Leicester.

Admin assistant two will help with maintaining membership records and will service the branches and users group committee, by arranging meetings and minutes. The work currently being done by our membership secretary and computer officer is steadily increasing and needs to be shared by a small team. The assistant should have basic keyboard skills or willingness to learn. Both assistants might be asked occasionally to deputise for one of our administrative officers.

Each admin assistant will be paid £250 per year, plus expenses. If you are interested,

please write to the general secretary who will contact applicants in mid January. The job descriptions have not been finalised and could be varied to suit the individual.

The society is also looking for unpaid help with other tasks.

For instance, we would like to appoint a membership services officer who could devise ways of giving our members added value for their membership. Several ideas have been put forward, ranging from discounts to advice on fare and timetable matters. We need someone to investigate the possibilities and draw up workable proposals.

The society is also looking for an archivist. Details of reports, books and documents are currently held by Railwatch editor Ray King who is also national vice chairman. He has plenty of other work to do for the society and would welcome an offer from a member to be the archivist.

We have a vast under-used resource in our archives and need to develop this as an important tool for our campaigning.

● A conference on East - West rail links is to be organised by Transport 2000 in Bedford on 27 March on the theme Roads Alone Cannot Cope. For details send an SAE to Richard Pill, 4 Rowlandson Way, Manton Heights, Bedford MK41 7LT.

Cyclists demand change of trains

Robust guarantees will need to be given to cyclists if the Government tries to sell off stations or franchise our rail services, general secretary Trevor Garrod warned in October.

Franchisees must carry bicycles on their trains and any private station owner must allow cycle access and provide cycle storage facilities.

Mr Garrod who was speaking to a Cyclists Touring Club conference in Norwich said there was scope for RDS and CTC to work together for a better deal for cyclists using trains.

He said the Government had shown no indication in its privatisation plans that it would make the environmentally friendly combination of train and bike any easier to use.

A workshop session discussed the current problems in detail and rebutted various arguments by some BR managers for restricting or banning bikes from trains.

Simple suggestions have been put forward to label cycle storage areas on trains and to include timetable symbols to show cycle facilities, like the symbols for catering facilities.

Incredible reasons had been given by certain managers for not doing this. However, it was also pointed out that ideas from transport campaigners often received an initial dusty response from managers and politicians, but were quietly implemented a year or two later!

Restrictions on bikes led to loss of revenue for BR. One family attending the conference spoke of using their bikes regularly to go on outings with BR. Because this was now much more difficult, they had bought a roof rack for their car and now took the machines by road.

In the longer term, rail investment must obviously be increased so that enough stock is built for all the business on offer. A comparison was drawn between BR's Regional Express two-car Sprinters and the eight-coach German Inter-Regio trains, which have special compartments and seats automatically reserved for cyclists.

T
RE
V
OR
G
AR
ROD'S
V
IEW



Putting the rail alternative

We in RDS cannot view railways in isolation from other modes of transport. Our time and resources must be devoted principally to rail, but we should not ignore the pressures for more and more road space and motorways. Nor can we ignore the double standards applied by government to road and rail investment.

Ten years ago, the March — Spalding railway line was closed to make it look more cost-effective to improve the A47 road at Guyhirn. Cost benefit analysis has long been employed to justify spending on new roads, but it is only just beginning to be considered for some rail projects.

For years we have argued that alternatives to road building should be carefully studied before taxpayers' money is committed. RDS has supported campaigners against the East London River Crossing. We are currently working on a report on how rail investment could obviate the need for grandiose plans to widen the M25. We plan to publish this in 1993.

Of course a feasible rail alternative does not exist for every road scheme. Sometimes a road is useful to improve circulation in a built-up area or even to give better access to a station.

But often road builders needing to justify their existence propose over-expensive schemes.

The Lowestoft Civic Society has been urging a prompt start on a new road and third crossing of the waterway which bisects the town. The growth of the town causes congestion at the only two existing bridges. Rail can only make a very limited contribution. Yet the Department of Transport has said that schemes like widening the M25 and A1 are more important. I have

urged the civic society to challenge this claim, since there are rail alternatives to the M25 and A1 schemes. A recent accident on the A140 between Ipswich and Norwich has been used by the road lobby to launch a campaign for multi-million pound dualling. In a letter to the press, I suggested that stiffer penalties and other measures to improve driving standards might cut accidents. Investing in additional stations on the parallel railway would have the effect of relieving road congestion. Interestingly no-one has written to the press disagreeing with me.

In recent years, a further factor has come into play. Our proposals for 450 miles of new route to be added to the rail passenger network mean that we must keep a watch on road schemes that might cut across abandoned trackbeds.

I have lodged an objection to the proposed Bedford southern bypass scheme suggesting that a bridge should be provided over the Bedford — Sandy trackbed to keep open the option of a future strategic rail link between Bedford and the East Coast Main Line.

Our South West Branch has taken a similar position towards a road scheme that would sever the former Sidmouth branch in Devon.

Interesting news has come from Scotland, where Central Regional Council has announced plans to abandon 22 road schemes costing over £30 million while increasing its spending on rail improvements. It shows that authorities are prepared to look at the rail alternative and take action. That must encourage us all.

● Trevor Garrod is general secretary of RDS and writes a column every four weeks for the magazine Rail.

Christmas offers

All-in prices (including post and packing) for these titles. Ideal Christmas presents.

South West by Rail £2.10

Surrey and Sussex by Rail £2.10

Thames and Downs by Rail £2.10

Wales and the Marches by Rail £2.10

Yorkshire by Rail £2.25

Lancs and Cumbria by Rail £2.25

Who Should Run Our Railways? £1.75

Rail for the Future £1.95

Great Railway Conspiracy (hardback) £12.95 (£2 off)

Orders for the above must be received by 31 January 1993.

Other interesting titles available post free:

High Speed Trains - Fast Tracks to the Future (new) £9.99

The Line that Refused to Die (new edition) £7.99

Traffic Congestion: Is There a Way Out? £9.95

Our Environment: A Bigger Role for Rail £4.75

Other books can also be ordered through RDS. Send orders or an SAE for a sales list to RDS sales officer, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN. Make cheques payable to RDS.

What a load of rubbish

Privatisation
condemned

The Government is kidding rail travellers, rail staff and even itself by claiming that privatisation is a new opportunity, rail users were told in November.

In fact the plans were a "load of rubbish", unrealistic and illogical, said train drivers' leader Lew Adams. Property speculators were the most likely to benefit.

Mr Adams, deputy general secretary of ASLEF, was applauded at the RDS-organised Rail User Groups conference in London after urging rail users not to accept privatisation. He warned how politicians had blundered every time they had tried to "sort out" the railways.

"They told us: Don't worry. Things will be better in future." They had been wrong each time - and they were wrong this time.

He said that even now, ridiculous things were happening on BR because of the preoccupation with profit. He described a high speed train being sent empty from St Pancras to get fuel at Derby and then back to St Pancras to take a revenue-earning train to Sheffield.

The train could not be sent just a few miles to jelling facilities at Bounds Green or Old Oak because they were different InterCity "profit centres". Mr Adams said that when he had told MPs what had been happening, they could not believe it — and had to have it confirmed.

But other amazing things were happening. Freight sector diesel engines were having to travel light 150 miles merely to take on fuel.

At Peterborough when an InterCity train had to be stopped in the station for an emergency, a following IC train was unable to divert through the back platform until the signaller had conferred with Regional Railways bosses.

The IC train was able to divert, but only after an £86 fee was agreed.

In Network SouthEast, the number of accountants had increased from five to 45. Many current rail managers displayed an amazing lack of knowledge when they met union officials. Some of them, for instance, needed "interpreters" to explain what DMUs were.

To make the finances look better than they were, BR was cooking the books, "stealing" money from the pension scheme.

People who tried to sound the alarm about BR's safety policies were "removed".

"It's stupid, it's ridiculous what they are trying to do to the railways," said Mr Adams.

Saving money is the paramount policy. Signal monitors were being fitted in cabs behind the driver! The result was that he had to turn round, taking his eyes off the track, to look at it.

In the future, instead of competition, there will be local monopolies. Nor will it be efficient. Far from it. Fares will soar and discounts will be phased out.

"We on BR are charging the highest fares possible and often providing a bad service," said Mr Adams.

BR is so strapped for cash that it is having to cut services and close stations but is being forced to spend £200,000 on consultants' reports on how to privatise.

In future, the privateers will want to run their train 10 minutes before the Flying Scotsman and knock £1 off the fare. But what about the knock-on effect on all the other services?

The Government seems to think that the London, Tilbury and Southend line is an ideal candidate for a franchise.

But no-one could run it more cheaply than BR does at present, with 35-year-old trains and 40-

RUG92 Rail User Groups conference

London 7 November 1992

year-old signals. Mr Adams said: "It's literally held together by string."

"All the franchisees can do is knock off the early morning trains, the off-peak trains and the Saturday and Sunday services. They might turn the finances round like that but it is NOT the way forward."

He added: "I have not yet met or heard of a franchisee who wants to run trains to provide a social service."

Richard Branson's airline flies the oldest jumbos in the world, uses retired pilots and pays them less.

"The paint holds his service together," said Mr Adams. Branson won't have a training school for rail drivers because it costs around £50,000 to train just one. He will expect to "buy them".

Meanwhile the desperate need in Britain is for proper investment. Mr Adams said: "The West Coast main line is getting more like Amtrak every day."

Publicly-run Amtrak is having to take over broken-down American private railways to re-introduce passenger trains.

In Britain, the promises in the Passenger's Charter were just propaganda. Mr Adams scoffed: "If you're 10 minutes late, you're on time!"

In Europe the 180-mph TGV will have an 11,000 mile network. But in Britain it will "flop out" of the Channel Tunnel and trundle along behind commuter trains. Asked if RDS should campaign to modify the privatisation

proposals rather than get them scrapped, Mr Adams said: "We should fight all the way to get them dropped. They can't work."

"Even some Tory MPs are beginning to understand that they won't work. Long-term investment in the railways will collapse."

Unfortunately railway managers were now being encouraged to make bids.

Mr Adams said bus company plans to take over branch lines and turn them into concrete busways were deplorable.

"We must have a conscience," he said. "What are our children going to inherit? It is a bigger issue than the railways. It is the environment itself."

RDS chairman Steve Wilkinson said rail privatisation looked like being the biggest fiasco since the poll tax and was likely to be the death knell for the railways as we know them.

The plans had caused a collapse of confidence throughout the industry. He had not heard of one user group which wanted privatisation.

Railway firms were laying off workers, and reopening schemes were "on ice".

"Branson should stay with his Mates!" said Mr Wilkinson to applause and laughter.

General secretary Trevor Garrod said members should distribute the two RDS leaflets on privatisation (available from Roland White, address back page).

● More than 100 delegates attended the conference at St Bride's Institute. There were afternoon workshop sessions on campaigning and rural rail.



Ice one

Austrian railways subject their new trains to extensive cold weather testing at Vienna-Arsenal to avoid the problems British Rail experienced with "the wrong kind of snow". Now BR's latest trains are also getting the treatment. Sample Networkers were shipped out to Vienna in November to be given the Austrian deep freeze as other Networkers went on trial in Kent.

Think small for freight

Current freight policies on the railways would appear to be eroding their natural environmental advantages. The limited number of terminals and sparse facilities for less than trainload traffic lead to dependence on heavy lorries collecting and delivering over considerable distances. Large containers and swap bodies are a menace on the roads. It has even been proposed that swap body lorries should be four tons heavier than the maximum now allowed.

By using small containers, swap bodies and BRUT trolleys, cheaper facilities would enable a comprehensive network of terminals exchanging traffic between trains and small environmentally friendly road vehicles to be provided, possibly using electric battery power and delivering and collecting up to five miles from the railhead.

While the larger number of rail terminals might complicate train working, this could be made more efficient with automatic couplers and modern automated switching yards. It should also be possible to deliver sundries traffic to local stations, using BRUT trolleys, without the need for sidings. If piggy-back operation is desired, small vehicles could fit on to flat wagons within the British loading gauge as well as use small roads.

Jonathan Dalton, 2 Regency Court, Enys Road, Eastbourne, Sussex BN21 2DF

Saying and doing

What is RDS doing to oppose the upgrading of several of the major transpennine roads in the north of England (A66, M62, A628) at the expense of rail for which plans were dropped?

I realise the Government is much less pro-rail than it publicly acknowledges. Since Mr Rifkin's road to rail publicity, there has not been a volte face so much as a continuation of the road lobby juggernaut.

However, I think that with pressure from public opinion, the Government could be persuaded to waste much less money on roads and encouraged to make useful investments in rail infrastructure.

I look forward to a barrage of mail arriving at Marsham Street.

Dr S Moir, 42 Aldred Road, Crookes, Sheffield

Friendly suggestion

Regardless of one's own views, one thing is certain. The Government will sell off and franchise rail services. While it could be useful to try to alter some of the less acceptable proposals, it would be futile to engage in blanket opposition to the whole package.

Therefore the most constructive thing that RDS can do is to understand the way our railway services will now be managed and to work with prospective operators to ensure they develop

their services in accordance with our aims. Perhaps RDS could even consider setting up a company to operate some of the franchised services on a "rail friendly" basis. By using the changes to our advantage, we can really advance our cause. By lobbying against them, we will merely become sidelined as another fringe pressure group with little influence on policy.

David Stevenson, 55 Western Road, Winchester

Dead ducks

May I add my congratulations to you on the high standard of Railwatch. I find it a very interesting magazine.

Mr general reaction to our railways' plight is one of extreme sadness. I am not incensed to do much about making improvements, because I feel that I, as an individual, am pretty powerless. No, it is a very sad state of affairs and I cannot see it becoming any better.

Grandiose schemes abound, but there never seems to be any "new" money available and all these schemes rely on investment. The current picture presented is of a slow, merciless deterioration into we know not what, from a robust, thriving network which served us all.

A change of government in April held out a ghost of a chance of change for the better, but in my view, privatisation via this Government will be a dead duck.

C D Pickstone, 12 Yorke Avenue, Marchwiel, Wrexham, Chwyd LL13 0SG

A fare point

While on holiday in Southport, I took the opportunity to travel to Manchester and Bury to visit the East Lancs railway. I tried to persuade Southport ticket office to give me a through docket but had no joy. The APTIS simply refused the instruction and I ended up booking only as far as Manchester. I made the mistake of going to Piccadilly and not getting off at Deansgate which is a far better connection.

After deciphering the ticket machine, I obtained a ticket for Bury at £2.20 off-peak return. Together with the £5.50 Manchester return, this totalled £7.70, compared with last year's £6.40.

The tram is certainly rather nicer than the old Bury units and rides better than your second article led me to expect. Acceleration on the fully reserved section is extremely rapid. However, it does seem to take an age to get from Piccadilly to Victoria.

I concluded that low-speed running is a must after at least half a dozen pedestrians had to be hoisted out of the way! One athletic type managed to run diagonally across the street somewhat out-facing the tram.

Through fares are available from the metro ticket machines to all greater Manchester BR stations: for instance, Manchester Piccadilly to

Appley Bridge on the Southport line came up as £4.30. I don't know what route you were supposed to take, bearing in mind that Manchester BR to the same station would cost a maximum fare of £2 off-peak using a GM Ranger ticket!

Reading the local press, there is obviously a dislike between BR and the tram operators, with the tram stations being ignored and the Centrobuss link being promoted for transfers between Victoria and Piccadilly free of charge for rail passengers.

In fact for passengers travelling within Greater Manchester, the tram is currently free within the city zone - but not for those holding tickets from outside Greater Manchester.

I tend to think that it was unnecessary to uproot two suburban rail lines, especially if the two operators can't or won't work together. Is this shades of things to come if BR lines are privatised or more than one operator allowed to use the same lines?

D J Cargill, 23 Harvest Road, Feltham, Middx

Taking political sides

Obviously there is much debate at the moment on the future of our rail network and the Government's plans. Generally there is much that can be supported in RDS's stance on the issue but I do think the organisation needs to go further.

The issue of Railwatch which came out before the election almost said: "Don't vote Tory", but RDS's neutrality in the political debate is folly. Our national executive should say we endorse Labour and Liberal Democrat rail policies. We should oppose the Government openly.

RDS has a powerful membership base and it is time that resource was used. There has never been a more crucial time for a public transport campaign to work in the political arena.

Simon T Martin, 2 King Street, Chertsey, Surrey

Counting the cost

The loss of through InterCity services to Telford (a development area) and Shrewsbury is symptomatic of the simplistic, accountant-driven decisions now being made by an apparently gutless BR senior management.

While it may be operationally convenient to confine through services to only the busiest parts of the system, BR is never going to entice or even retain nervous, heavily laden or elderly customers if they are increasingly to be forced to change trains part way. It is claimed that there will be a "simple cross-platform connection" but is that even guaranteed?

Instead of Blackpool losing its through London service, the obvious solution is electrification from Preston. What other destinations are on InterCity's hit list? I fear that the downside of East Coast main line electrification could be the end of the King's Cross - Hull service.

It is surely in everyone's interests, including BR, the local councils and the nation, to find ways of maintaining through services. Otherwise we will see the progressive truncation of the main network and overall loss of customers.

J Davis, 41 Fairmead Avenue, Harpenden, Herts

Time's up for roads

The Department of Transport wants to build a motorway link road from junction 38 of the M1 to the M62, at a cost of £135 million despite a fierce local opposition. Nobody wants it.

The money would be much better spent to rebuild the local railway line and to reopen it with eight stations, giving a service to Sheffield and Leeds.

P Oldroyd, 211 Midland Rd, Royston, Barnsley

Late night buses: I don't think the editorial reply to Richard Watkins of Horncastle was really adequate (Railwatch 53). Horncastle did once have a railway station but at the end of a branch line from a rural junction (itself now closed). One could scarcely put forward a convincing case for its reopening or even retention. Even if the line had been retained, this would be no guarantee of an evening service. People from places like Horncastle should be able to make day trips by train, without relying on car owners to ferry them to and from the railhead. There is a simple way of ensuring this and that is to provide late-night buses from the railhead timed to connect with specific trains. Simon Norton, 6 Hertford Street, Cambridge

Late night trains: British Rail dealt a blow to travellers on the St Pancras to Sheffield line by making the last departure out of St Pancras on a Saturday evening at 21.15. I can remember the time when there was a half past midnight train. For some years there has been a 23.30 departure which has sometimes meant some anxiety and a scramble if one's theatre performance in the West End ended at about 23.00. Now all ideas of an evening at the theatre are out of the question. I am now retired and can get to London on a weekday. But it does mean theatregoers who are still working can no longer enjoy a Saturday evening at a West End theatre, unless they stay in London overnight of course.

N J Arnold, 14 Midway Road, Leicester LE5 5TP



The victim Picture: National Asthma Campaign

Choking our children

Britain is flouting yet another European Commission pollution directive. It has failed to take action to curb air pollution from nitrogen dioxide which causes asthma and bronchitis.

The result is that British hospitals are now flooded with children suffering from these two ailments. *The prime polluter is the car.*

The worst aspect of this epidemic is that it is being hidden. The Government has failed, as it was ordered to do, to collect proper information about levels of the pollution.

In fact it does worse. It puts out statistics reassuring city dwellers that their air quality is "very good" when the opposite is the case, particularly for the central and inner city zones. The Government's figures are highly suspect.

At the last budget, the British Government attempted to stimulate car sales with tax incentives. In fact it is required under European law to

enact legislation to *limit* emissions of nitrogen dioxide and set up stations to monitor it. It has failed to do both.

During the 1980s when Mrs Thatcher trumpeted the marvels of the "great car economy", levels of the gas increased by 43 per cent. Now 19 million people in Britain live in areas which exceed EC levels.

A Friends of the Earth survey showed that there were substantial increases in nitrogen dioxide emissions where there has been major road building. It is calling on the Government to cancel the £20 billion road building programme. The Government's response was to question FoE's survey.

Now though the European Commissioner for the Environment Karel van Miert has begun legal proceedings against the Government in October. Watch to see how the British Government will try to wriggle out of that one.

Keeping track on the world

Increasingly we are facing up to the fact that Britain can no longer afford to exist in splendid isolation in the modern world.

While our governments struggle to come to terms with even the simplest tasks, let alone the complex task of organising a proper transport system, European and other countries are forging ahead.

High-speed main lines are being built and planned, along with new metro systems, even in places dismissed by little Englanders as backward. In rail terms, Britain has much to learn from its neighbours, particularly in Europe.

Keeping us in touch with rail developments in the rest of the world is the international and EC committee of RDS. John Barfield, a stalwart of RDS and the committee for years, explains what the committee has been doing.

RDS has always been a keen supporter of closer links with Europe. We have worked with like-minded bodies, such as the Channel Tunnel Association to achieve this end.

Campaigning was stepped up for the Euro elections of 1984. Then of course Europe took centre stage with the Eurotunnel bid of 1986 and the Act and Treaty of 1987.

Since that time, the committee has spent much effort in promoting rail links to the tunnel, including organising the branches to take part in the statutory consultation with BR required by section 40 of the Channel Tunnel Act. Apart from the issues of Customs, immigration and security, we have targeted on funding, routing and timing of construction of a high speed link.

While everyone seems to agree it is needed if Britain is to secure the maximum benefit from the tunnel when it opens in 1993, no-one seems prepared to pay for it or, for that matter, have it in their back yard.

In association with the London and Home Counties branch, we held a series of seminars in Ashford to promote the link. But for the third time in almost as many years, we are studying and commenting on the latest proposals for a line through East London.

The recent announcement from the Government that it must also cater for freight traffic looks set to delay things further. We now unfortunately face the ludicrous possibility of TGV-style trains popping out of the tunnel to disgorge passengers at a temporary halt some-

where near Ashford. Even as I write, the construction of an urgently needed international gateway station at Ashford is the subject of yet another re-appraisal. The prospects for through trains to the regions or to an interchange at London King's Cross seem as remote as ever. However, with the increasing power and influence of the European Commission and Parliament, we have sought to build up our contacts with a body of pro-rail MEPs.

One of those MEPs, Brian Simpson, was guest speaker at the 1991 RDS Rail User Groups conference in Birmingham. We also have two MEP vice presidents.

The EC directed in 1991 that all European railways should separate their infrastructure from their operations. It is also trying to encourage combined transport, and international operating agreements between state railways and has ambitious proposals for a Euro high-speed rail network. Even when the Channel Tunnel is completed, there will still be plenty for the committee to do, including pressing for better links with Ireland. The original aim of the 1991 infrastructure directive was to create a

level playing field for road and rail. However, to judge from recent EC proposals, the road lobby appears to have hijacked the commission in the same way it took over Britain's Department of Transport.

The committee is currently tackling the problems of additionality, the proper allocation of European funding to UK projects, VAT on fares, and international ticketing which was the subject of a 1991 RDS report.

As the committee's contribution to 1993, we have been giving encouragement and support to general secretary Trevor Garrod in publishing a European railguide.

From the time that the committee was inaugurated in 1978, we have kept in touch with the North American scene. We regularly exchange literature with groups in New York, Dallas and Georgia as well as trying to keep abreast of the activities of the national rail pressure group in Washington, the National Association for Rail Passengers.

● We are able to offer a lecture on the history and workings of Amtrak.

❄ Ideal Christmas gift for a rail fan ❄

You can present your friends or family with a gift of RDS membership for Christmas.

They will get a year's subscription to RDS, which includes four issues of Railwatch. As a special bonus, they will also get a free copy of the RDS book *Fighting for Rail* which normally costs £1.80. (*Fighting for Rail* is not available for gift membership at concessionary rates).

RDS is able to campaign for better rail services in Britain - only with your backing. This is particularly urgent at the moment with the threat to the network from privatisation proposals and the growing awareness of the need for an environmentally sensible transport system.

My name.....

My address.....

RDS number if available.....

Please send a card and a free copy of *Fighting for Rail* to:.....

Address.....

Send this form with a cheque for £10 to Frank Hastlow, 49 Inham Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B74 2TQ. For family rates see panel on back page. Cheques payable to RDS. Please allow two weeks for delivery.

Hyacinth is on our side



ACTRESS Patricia Routledge has accepted our invitation to be a vice president of the society. Miss Routledge who is known to millions in her comic role as toffee-nosed Hyacinth Bucket in the BBC TV show *Keeping Up Appearances* is a great fan of rail travel.

Rather than drive, she uses trains as her main mode of travel in a busy schedule and recently spoke in a TV interview of the advantages of rail travel.

She recently won a British Comedy Award for her portrayal of Hyacinth and has enjoyed a distinguished career on both sides of the Atlantic, in productions ranging from Shakespeare to Brecht.

She won a Tony Award as best actress in a musical for her role in *Darling of the Day* on Broadway 25 years ago. She has also appeared in Gilbert and Sullivan productions and in an impressive list of programmes on TV and radio.

Farewell: It is with sadness, however, that we have to report the death in August of the Very Reverend John Herbert Severn Wild, one of our longest serving vice presidents.

In the 1960s he campaigned vigorously against the rundown of rail in the North East. After his retirement he continued to take an active interest in our work.

He was an expert on timetables but also found time for many other interests. For more than 20 years, until 1973, Mr Wild was Dean of Durham. He started his career as a curate in Newcastle, before becoming Chaplain and later Master of University College, Oxford.

Stalwart record: Another RDS member of many years standing, Richard Hulse, has died. He was very active in our Midlands branch and, for much of the 1980s, he also played a part at national level, serving on the national executive, reopenings committee and branches and users committee. After his retirement from the engineering industry, he moved to Yorkshire, a county for which he felt great affection. Richard was a keen cyclist, being a life member of the Cyclists' Touring Club. He celebrated his 70th birthday by cycling from York to Scarborough!

The vice presidents of RDS have always been chosen to represent a wide range of men and women in the public eye.

There is now a vacancy and the national executive would like to make a nomination to the AGM next year. General secretary Trevor Garrod would be interested to receive suggestions from members.

Winning ways

The RDS monthly lottery is becoming more popular every month. The winners for August were Mrs M Redmond, Billericay £62.80, G W Calvert, London £39.25, Michael Gooder, Reading £23.55 A E Harvey, Derby £15.70, Joan Rustick, Whitehaven £7.85, Giles Angell, Kidderminster £7.85.

September: Miss J Horrigan, Southsea £66, R Neville, Cardiff £41.25, J Allen, Douglas, Isle of Man £24.75, E J Partington, Stourbridge £16.50, Dave Fleming, Bolton £8.25, S J Griffiths, Nottingham £8.25.

October: F G Challis, Cambridge £66, J L Horton, Stowmarket £41.25, P J Pitcher, Berkhamsted £24.75, R H Dewhurst, Southampton £16.50, C Lindley, Sutton Coldfield £8.25, David Marsh, Dunblane £8.25.

If you would like to join the lottery for one year, send a cheque for £12 to Dave Finch, 28 Neville Avenue, Kidderminster, Worcs DY11 7AL. Make cheques payable to RDS and remember to include your RDS membership number.

Doing the b

By Graham Nalty

Many business travellers use cars when their lifestyles would be enhanced if they went by train.

Many are ensnared in the company car trap where they are provided with a car and expected to use it.

Others are owner drivers who respond to the cash incentive of being paid high mileage allowance rates.

Self employed people like me often use the car as a matter of habit.

When my business expanded into manufacturing audio amplifiers, I expected to visit specialist hi-fi shops around Britain by car so I could give demonstrations.

But it soon became apparent that car travel was very tiring. On one occasion I drove from Derby to Cambridge, hitting the Nottingham rush hour and taking almost an hour to get round the city and then on to Stafford, catching the worst of the M6 evening peak on the way.

By 9pm that night I was already in bed exhausted.

The following day I had an appointment in Bournemouth and travelled by train from Birmingham International. That evening I was able to join friends in Derby at the pub, fully refreshed thanks to a relaxing train journey.

On another occasion, I had an appointment in North London at 9am. After leaving Derby by road before 6am, I arrived shattered at 9.15.

So I decided again to try a combination of car and train to visit one of my best customers in Watford. I drove the 30 miles to Nuneaton where I got on a train which took one hour to get to Watford.

To visit another good customer in Radlett, I drove 15 miles to Loughborough, then took an InterCity train to Luton, switching to Thameslink for the trip to Radlett.

I started to visit twice as many shops once I began to sell interconnecting cables for hi fi amplifiers. The numbers increased with the recession as I had to promote my products to new customers. By spring of 1992, I was visiting customers old and new every Tuesday and Thursday to earn new orders.

A big problem in changing from car travel to rail is carrying all the samples and paperwork needed for the day's business. A car can be loaded with everything of conceivable use and more.

When travelling by train, you can only take as much as you can carry. First you have to decide exactly what you need. Then pack it so it can be easily carried by hand.

To carry audio amplifiers, I designed a simple wire frame which could hold up to three amplifiers.

If you have more than two hands worth, you need to plan the journey and connections very carefully to avoid stairs.

When I do use the car, I often break the day with a train journey. On a car trip to West Yorkshire, I decided to park the car at Leeds station and take the train to York. On another car trip to Aylesbury, I parked the car at Leighton Buzzard to visit a customer in Watford.

On both occasions, I was less tired than if I had

TOP TIPS

- Use rail for all journeys of over one hour
- If you do use the car for a long day trip, break the journey with a side trip by rail
- Plan exactly what you need for each trip
- Design a comfortable means of carrying awkward samples so everything, including newspaper, snacks and raincoat, can be carried with two hands
- Be prepared for trains to run late, especially when planning connections
- Carry a complete timetable so you can change your plans
- Drive to stations which are not surrounded by traffic congestion
- With heavy luggage, use stations with car parks convenient to booking offices
- Avoid the London Underground if you have luggage. Use Thameslink
- Choose rail routes with good frequency of services
- Use taxis from stations if necessary
- Use the time on the train for paper work, drafting letters and reading trade magazines
- Use Saver and Supersaver tickets where possible

spent the whole day in the car. We often hear complaints from people who miss meetings when travelling by train and then resolve to go by car next time.

I am fortunate that I rarely have to keep to strict appointment times.

But on occasions I have been early. Travelling from Nuneaton to Petersfield, with two 45 minute connections at Coventry, Reading and Guildford, I reached my customer's shop before him.

The choice of railhead to start a journey is important. The road journey must be reasonably free of traffic so that journey time can be accurately predicted.

Avoid roads which carry heavy morning rush hour traffic. The station car park should have plenty of spaces visible on entry so you do not have to drive round looking for a space. If you are carrying heavy hand luggage, the walk from the car park to booking office and platform must be as short as possible.

Long drives through slow suburban streets and long walk from the car can be discouraging.

Crossing London is a serious discouragement to rail travel. The London Underground is a marvellous way to travel between terminal station if you have only a light brief case but with two heavy cases, it is no fun at all.

But I have discovered how wonderful Bromley South station and Thameslink services are allowing me to avoid Victoria Underground station in the rush hour.

Thameslink is a tremendous improvement to the quality of rail journeys through London and praise is due to all in BR who have made it

business

success. Thameslink 2000 would provide positive solutions to many more journey problems. For journeys to the west of London, I travel via Nuneaton, Coventry and Reading.

But much could be done to convince the public that investment in rail is better than spending money on an even bigger M25.

For the public to be confident in rail's convenience, service frequencies on all short urban routes need to be half hourly or better.

When making several calls during the day, a missed train on an hourly service means that a lot of valuable working time is lost waiting for the next train. Sometimes important business negotiations have to be hurried to catch the train.

Most people think that using a car would enable me to call on more customers during the working day. But by rail, I can start out earlier and work later because it is not so tiring.

Most customers are in large towns and within easy reach of stations. If I travel by rail, I am more refreshed when I reach a customer at Margate after a five-hour journey by train than when visiting a customer in Birmingham after an hour in the car. The more refreshed I am, the more effective my sales negotiations will be.

Taxis are always available at major rail stations and offer better access to town centres than with a private car, particularly with increased pedestrianisation.

On a train, I can also use time profitably, either working or eating. I always do my quarterly VAT returns on train journeys and also read trade magazines thoroughly. In a car, stopping to eat adds to the overall journey time.

Saver and Supersaver tickets can make rail travel very competitive. For every pound spent on petrol, up to a pound again is needed for servicing, maintenance and depreciation.

As Supersaver tickets do not allow a break on the outward journey, my usual plan is to start early enough to reach the furthest call at 10am and 11am and work back towards Derby, breaking the journey on the return.

Luckily the railway network is very flexible in the choice of routes. I can think of at least 20 valid ways to travel from Derby to Glasgow. So only occasionally do I need to buy extra tickets to make additional calls off the direct route.

The flexibility of buying tickets from one agency is important and privatisation will be a disaster if separate tickets are sold by Regional Railways and InterCity.

For journeys to the South Coast, I can leave Derby at 6am and be in Brighton by 9.30am or Margate by 11am at Supersaver rates.

Rail travel in Britain is good, but could be very much better. From my travels, I have seen many opportunities to improve services.

There are many good reasons why we should encourage more use of rail transport as an alternative to the private car. Reducing accidents, pollution, stress, congestion and overall cost are the obvious ones.

The wide choice of rail services available to me has made a significant positive impact on my business enabling me to visit many long distance customers and open new accounts as a result. I certainly would not want to drive the long distances I cover by train.

LOCAL ACTION

Midlands

The Snow Hill - Smethwick West route is to be reopened in 1994-5. This decision was made by West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority on 5 October and will fund the £23 million scheme with contributions from sale of WM Buses, from the European Community and from BR. The four-mile line will have three intermediate stations at Vyse Street, the Hawthorns and Galton Junction. This former Great Western route was closed in 1972 and RDS - which strongly objected to the original closure - has spent the last 20 years constantly urging its reopening for through suburban trains.

A consultants' study of rail demand and capacity in the West Midlands has reported that New Street station can accommodate far more trains with shorter platforms, new signalling and faster, remodelled approach tracks. The remodelling of Proof House Junction flyover is also urged. The study concluded that there is considerable potential for increasing rail loadings and reports that the greatest potential exists on the Castle Bromwich route. The RDS campaign for a direct Walsall - Wolverhampton service is endorsed as entirely feasible.

InterCity plans for a new Heartlands station have been rephased beyond the original 1998 target into an unknown next century date. Its future will be resolved in April 1993 when feasibility and viability studies become available. The privatisation prospects will also bear heavily on InterCity's future decisions on this £50 million project.

Trainload Freight has put forward plans to sever and single the 12-mile Walsall - Dudley - Stourbridge line. This route is eventually to have its tracks shared by a Midland Metro service and the WMPTA has lodged objections to Railfreight's proposals. RDS Midlands has urged the early introduction of a half-hourly diesel multiple unit semi-fast service over the Dudley line.

From May 1993, Network Southeast will be extending its new Turbos via Leamington Spa. Eight Networker Turbos will run each way per day between Marylebone and Birmingham Snow Hill. Also Stratford-on-Avon will have one Turbo train each way to and from Paddington and a return service with Oxford. The Turbos will also operate regular services along the Cotswolds line.

Midlands user groups ran loco-hauled charters from Stratford to Llandudno on 12 July and from Sutton Coldfield to Scarborough on 19 September. Both incurred a financial loss but ran well. The branch will be marking its 40 years history in November. The original Railway Development Association committee first met on 11 November 1952. Sadly a founder member Richard Hulse died in late July. A still active early 50s committee member is Frank Hastlow.

Alan Bevan

Scotland

The massive closures proposed for the coal industry prompt us to think of the parallels between coal and rail industries. Both are being slimmed down for privatisation.

Just as the coal industry has suffered from a disastrous lack of a national energy policy, so the railways are suffering from a total lack of any co-ordinated transport policy.

While both coal and rail are subjected to market forces, their main competitors, the nuclear industry and road building respectively, benefit from massive Government subventions.

Indeed the parallel is such that pressure from the nuclear power and road lobbies has resulted in huge white elephants such as the Torness power station and the M74 road. If BR had been responsible for such extravagance, they would have been crucified by the Tory party. When the gas runs out, future generations will wonder why we burned gas

in power stations while abandoning massive reserves of coal. Similarly when the oil runs out, people will be aghast at the disastrous consequences of so increasing our dependence on road transport. The Government has published a consultation paper on local government reform with options ranging from 15 to 51 single tier authorities for Scotland.

The branch will be making a submission that there must be some provision for larger authorities to deal with transport planning and co-ordination. One option for example would be the establishment of five or six passenger transport executives, covering the whole of Scotland.

The branch has written to all five Tory backbenchers in Scotland pleading with them to ensure that any system of rail privatisation will not make the network more difficult to use for passengers and that any system of franchising should be conditional upon through ticketing, acceptance of all railcards and rover tickets and proper timetables containing all services.

The letter pointed out as an example of how not to do things the fact that the former Highlands and Islands Development Board comprehensive timetable has been dropped because it could no longer be guaranteed to be accurate as a result of bus deregulation.

Other issues which the branch has pursued are rail use for a barytes mine in the Highlands of Perthshire, rail access to out-of-town football stadia and a submission to the Scottish Select Committee on links between Scotland and the Channel Tunnel.

Douglas Smart

London and Home Counties

Despite widespread protests, Secretary of State for transport John MacGregor gave consent for closing Primrose Hill station in 1992 and withdrawing train services between Liverpool Street and Watford Junction (via Primrose Hill) and Richmond (via Gospel Oak).

Because of flooding, the last trains did not actually serve Primrose Hill. British Rail maintained its contempt for passengers who have tried to use the service by failing to send anyone there to warn passengers.

Since the trains were re-routed, the service was progressively cut until it had only one train from Watford in the morning and one train back in the evening. Even this train failed to run half the time.

There were of course plenty of people who wanted to use these trains but they switched to other more reliable, if overcrowded, services. BR's frustrating and deceitful policies have, however, been condoned by the Secretary of State. This closure demonstrates the impotence of the Passenger's Charter which gives no guarantee of a minimum standard of service.

It also highlights the continuing under-funding of BR by the Government which happily funds road building. We must be ready to defend rail services, particularly in the uncertainty of privatisation.

Howard Thomas

Envelope re-use labels

RDS envelope re-use labels are available with the slogan: For Cleaner Air, Go by Rail.

£1.80 per 100 post free from RDS Sales, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN. Cheques payable to Railway Development Society.

LOCAL ACTION

Lincolnshire

Curve: We welcomed the restoration of the westbound curve between Marsh North and West Junctions near Grimsby. It will improve access to Grimsby's Union Dock for steel imports and exports.

Stocking up: An observant RDS member at Barnetby, Dr Don Peacock, who spotted an unadvertised mid-afternoon empty diesel multiple unit working between Lincoln and Cleethorpes has had his suggestion to make it an advertised working taken up by Regional Railways. A new 1503 Lincoln — Cleethorpes entered the Monday to Friday timetable from 28 September, but regrettably too late to make the printed book. Only the accompanying supplement shows it. On Saturdays, it runs from Lincoln at 1531 over the same route. This working does appear in the timetable. In both cases the working makes public an extension of existing Newark - Lincoln services. The new services are particularly welcome at Market Rasen, Barnetby and points north as they will fill what was a regrettable gap in the afternoon service of some three and a half hours.

RDS has joined the campaign by leaders of industry, commerce and economic development in both Humberside and Lincolnshire to persuade InterCity to reverse its planned withdrawal in May 1993 of the once-a-day Cleethorpes to London direct 125 service. We have pointed out that it might be part of a plan to withdraw all peripheral InterCity operations to "tidy up" its business before privatisation.

Flagship problems: There are worries over the reliability of the new Cleethorpes - Manchester 158 service. We recommended such a service in our Rail Strategy published last year but late running affected the service badly in the first few weeks and still does from time to time. Many problems occur between Brocklesby and Scunthorpe where the new hourly service shares the rail infrastructure with the imported iron ore and coal workings from Immingham to Scunthorpe. The route is still signalled by mechanical boxes, much of it under absolute block working, with some long sections. The longest of these is between Elsham and Appleby (4.7 miles) over a track formation bedevilled by subsidence and consequential speed restrictions, causing freight trains to take up to 10 minutes to clear. Even worse has been a spate of freight train failures causing hour-long delays while an assisting engine has been sought.

Adopted: We have welcomed the decision of South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive to sponsor the hourly Doncaster — Scunthorpe stopping train. This supplements the 158 Manchester service and effectively gives Scunthorpe a 30-minute train service to Doncaster. The PTE now pays £40,000 a year to support the service even though, beyond Thorne South, it crosses into Humberside. Happily Humberside County Council is co-operating by contributing £5,000 to the PTE in recognition of the benefits to Crowle, Althorpe and Scunthorpe.

Barnetby: This busy junction station which lost its station staff in a cost-cutting exercise on 30 May still lacks the promised "long line" PA system which would at least advise customers of delays and disruptions. With two island platforms, confusion occurs when trains are diverted from their usual route. RDS members are monitoring the situation and keeping a dossier of incidents.

Joint line: The branch is delighted with the increased rail service on the joint line which has effectively doubled the frequency between Sleaford and Spalding. The new service pro-

vides additional services between Doncaster, Gainsborough, Lincoln, Sleaford, Spalding and Peterborough. Its introduction, unfortunately with little publicity, is a precursor of other improvements over the next five years thanks to a £3 million financial package agreed between Lincolnshire County Council and Regional Railways. Better services, new stations and level crossing modernisation will see revenue rise and infrastructure costs fall. We have long advocated these improvements and the commitment to new stations at Donington and Pinchbeck. They lost their services in 1961. An RDS survey and sponsored cycle ride to Donington in 1987 helped to make this all happen.

Strategy: The branch is working on a new Rail Strategy for Mid and South Lincolnshire which should be published in early 1993. If you would like to submit ideas for possible inclusion in the new strategy, please contact me at 312 Wharf Road, Ealand, Scunthorpe DN17 4JW. If you would like a copy of our already-published South Humberside Rail Strategy, send 50p (cheques payable to RDS).

Brian Hastings

East Anglia

Associated British Ports manager Robert Gravestock has renewed his pressure for Lowestoft station to be closed, the line cut back more than half a mile inland and the redundant land to be sold to him "so that the port can expand".

Under pressure, Regional Railways agreed to conduct a passenger survey for which ABP paid part of the cost.

The general secretary told the local press about this and, as a result, the letter columns of the *Lowestoft Journal* were full of correspondence on this issue for over two months.

Those correspondents supporting Mr Gravestock were outnumbered four to one by those wanting the station to stay where it is in the town centre and only a few minutes walk from the award-winning beach.

Indications are that respondents to the survey were also heavily in favour of keeping the station central, although at the time of writing the results have not been published.

Our corporate member, the East Suffolk Travellers' Association produced a leaflet *Keep Lowestoft Station central* which has been widely distributed.

Trevor Garrod

Wessex

Public problems: The branch is actively seeking assurances on through ticketing and co-ordinated timetabling if, as threatened, a large number of franchised operators spring up, following the Government's White Paper on privatisation.

Freight rates: Freight issues have been to the fore recently. The Midhurst line has been in the news with council plans to turn it into a footpath. Following local action by members, the branch is seeking a grant to restore part of the line for freight working. News has reached us that charges to Foster Yeoman, which uses rail for massive movements of stone aggregates, are set to go through the roof, jeopardising their Wessex operations. There have also been delicate negotiations concerning the Post Office and possible moves to switch junk mail and other traffic to the roads.

Rail snails: We had an interesting meeting with Thames Valley branch which featured the snail's pace InterCity Cross Country service from Poole to northern parts - average 40 mph.

End to neglect: The branch has published its

first book for many years entitled *End of the Line for Neglect about the Waterloo - Exeter line*. The branch is encouraged by the level of sales and the interest the book has raised. We are delighted to see that Wiltshire County Council has given the reopening of Wilton station priority, after the improvement to Salisbury station forecourt and parking layout.

Reopening reward: We were delighted to see, from the draft Hampshire County Council public transport plan that reopening of the Chandlers Ford line is in pole position. A great reward for all our hard work on this project.

Peter Argem

North West

The much-publicised InterCity withdrawal from Blackpool at the end of the summer timetable went ahead despite a national outcry. It has been hinted that InterCity would be interested in returning should the Blackpool line be electrified. The North West branch launched a leaflet, advocating Blackpool - Manchester electrification, in November.

Branch members wrote objections to the proposed closure and relocation of Morecambe station and we made representations at the Transport Users Consultative Committee hearing held in October. Once again we acknowledge the assistance of our colleagues in Yorkshire, who also made objections.

Indications from Regional railways suggest that closure notices will soon be appearing for the Frodsham — Halton Junction line, the direct line from Liverpool to North Wales. When will it end?

Serious cracks have been discovered in two arches of the Frodsham viaduct which carries the Chester - Warrington line over the River Weaver. The engineer promptly banned freight trains with an axle-load of 23 tonnes.

Several daily oil trains from Stanlow oil refinery to Leeds and Jarrow were diverted for four weeks while repairs were carried out. The diversions, which required two reversals, would have been made much easier had the Helsby - Mouldsworth line, closed in July, been available. Unfortunately the junction points at Helsby had been removed and replaced with plain track. Meanwhile the Northwich — Sandbach line, closed with the Helsby — Mouldsworth, appears to have been re-erected and is used by certain freight and engineers' trains.

The branch has taken an interest in the redevelopment of Manchester's Victoria station. Regional Railways project manager Richard Brown explained how the railway will be incorporated into the development of a 16,000 seat indoor stadium and shops. The branch remains concerned about delays in resignalling the Victoria area until well after the redevelopment of Victoria station. The lack of capacity may inhibit future service improvements in Manchester. On the benefit side, the redevelopment will take account of future electrification and the simplified layout will make the case for electrifying Victoria, as part of a Manchester - Blackpool scheme, much better.

In the last North West report, we highlighted problems which would occur with the cutback of Chester — Manchester services to Altrincham on Sundays, forcing BR passengers to use the Metrolink light rail system at extra expense to travel onwards to Manchester. Agreement was reached prior to the start of the new timetable allowing BR tickets to be valid on Metrolink on Sundays. Unfortunately the main timetable boards at Manchester Piccadilly give no information about the Metrolink connection. Instead it says No Sunday Service against all the stations between Altrincham and Chester.

Robert Cummings

Severnside

Plans to reopen three stations on the former Midland route from Bristol have been given backing from Gloucestershire County Council environment committee. They want to see a rail service restored at Charfield, Coaley Junction, and Ashchurch. The recently formed Coaley Junction Action Committee, promoted by branch members, has put additional pressure on BR and the council for action on the same route as the popular reopened Yate station. The environment committee is also to ask the Department of Transport to take another look at its forecasts for new roads and the need to upgrade old ones.

A replacement station for Wootton Bassett station sited beside the proposed bypass would be a convenient railhead on the Great Western main line for people from Lyneham, Calne, Malmesbury and West Swindon.

A new station to serve Bristol Rovers' new ground at Hallen on the now freight-only Henbury line is being promoted by Bristol City Council. The present club ground is at Bath.

The recent introduction of Pacer and Sprinter trains on the Bristol to Severn Beach line has been greatly welcomed by regular travellers.

Eric Barbery

Yorkshire

Ilkley impasse: Infrastructure work for the Airedale-Wharfedale electrification is now well under way. The line to Ilkley was closed for several weeks during August to allow bridge and tunnel work. However, we still await a breakthrough on the rolling stock after the collapse of a leasing deal because of uncertainties over privatisation. Correspondence between RDS Yorkshire secretary Denis Bradbury and various Ministers only elicited the expected buckpassing replies, so it now looks as though we may be in for a repeat of the Leeds - Doncaster episode whereby electric services are inaugurated with geriatric units from NSE.

Suspended animation: Branch chairman James Towler is also engaged in protracted correspondence with the Department of Transport and CTCC over the so-called tripartite agreement on the conduct of closure proposals. Both the Morecambe case and the separate Castleford - Milford proposal come under the agreement. But BR was allowed to withhold details of the services to be affected by their closure plans, thus making matters much harder for opponents. Our pressure appears to be paying off, however, since the CTCC is now to press the Department of Transport for agreement to be revised so particulars of affected train services are published in future closure notices.

In a similar vein, we are also contesting the newly issued clause which allows BR to "suspend" services for up to six months before issuing a closure proposal. Though designed to clarify the situation where trains have to be temporarily withdrawn on safety grounds, we are concerned that BR, or its privatised successors, could exploit this by deliberately "suspending" a service prior to issuing a closure notice in an attempt to eliminate potential objectors and present a fait accompli.

Askern initiative: The Yorkshire contribution to the current RDS reopenings initiative is to take the form of a meeting in Askern, near Doncaster, to stir up pressure for reintroduction of passenger services on the Knottingley - Shaftholme Junction freight line with new stations at Askern, Norton, and possibly Womersley.

Brighouse delays: The people of Askern might well have some time to wait for their trains if the experience of the would-be rail users of Brighouse is a guide. Though reopening of the Halifax - Huddersfield line is firmly on the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive's agenda, financial constraints mean that the planned opening date continues to slip. Two years ago, the reopening was two years away. Today it is still two years away. Would anyone wager that, in two years time, it won't still be two years away?

David Pickersgill

A flying start

By John Barfield

Three out of four people questioned in a Chicago survey said they would prefer to use America's Amtrak trains rather than go by air.

For years, most long distance travellers in America have chosen to go by air and the Government has been largely content to see passenger rail services wither and die.

But while drivers are discovering gridlock, airlines are having to grapple with winglock. At the same time, the American public is rediscovering the joys of travelling by train and putting pressure on its previously road lobby-dominated administration to improve services.

There is increasing public resistance to building new airports to cope with the growing numbers of people who want to travel.

New airports are having to be built in remote sites which can then be linked to the major centres of population by high-speed rail lines.

Palmdale airport in California is one example.

There is also the major problem of air traffic control in crowded skies.

"We can build more aeroplanes and we can even build more airports," said senator Daniel Moynihan. "But try as we might, we cannot build more air space."

The question is being increasingly asked how rail and airline services can be integrated.

The Americans have watched the success of European airlines like Lufthansa operating its own rail services between Frankfurt airport and Bonn, Cologne and Dusseldorf. These trains are scheduled as "flights" in the timetable and no re-booking is required at the airport.

Now they are asking: Shouldn't we be doing something similar?

Such integration is advocated in a new book published in New York called *Supertrains*.

It points out that Amtrak carries more passengers between New York and Washington than the Pan Am and Trump shuttles put together.

The book also questions the U.S. over-reliance on cars and lorries from both a strategic and environmental standpoint.

Increasing numbers of people are advocating high-speed rail as the ideal mode of travel for journeys of between 300 and 600 miles.

What is holding up development of such services? First and foremost is the combined influence on Capitol Hill of the road and airline lobbies.

But a new era of supertrains is also being delayed by the fact that there is no level playing field in deciding on funding for rail, road and air infrastructure.

Rail passengers had to pay a 10 per cent federal tax on all rail tickets but investment in rail was restricted because it was judged as giving money away to railway shareholders. Much of that rail tax revenue was instead ploughed into developing roads and airports! Amtrak also has to struggle with the requirement

that development of high speed rail must favour the entire system with no priority to any particular corridors or states. That is a sure recipe for stagnation.

Outgoing president George Bush, an oil man, has been no great friend of the railways but the new vice president Al Gore has backed several rail schemes.

While the federal administration pours out billions of dollars for roads and airports, the state-funded Amtrak network of passenger trains remains alive only because Congress and rail users have refused to let it die.

With the 43,000 mile interstate highway system, initiated by the Eisenhower government in the 1950s, nearing completion, gridlock and pollution are showing up its weaknesses.

The creation of this road network has cost £82 billion, three times more than was expected. Further road building is likely to be subjected to hostile public scrutiny.

Americans who travel in Europe, aboard modern efficient trains are returning home to ask why they don't have the same.

● *Supertrains* by Joseph Vranich is published by St Martin's Press, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York NY 10010. ISBN 0-312-06476-4

The practical difficulties of travelling by train in America were explained by Frank McKinney who visited Britain from the little town of Great Bend, Kansas. If he wants to travel by train to Chicago, he has the choice of - one train a day. He has to drive 60 miles to Hutchinson, Kansas, where he can catch the 2.30 am train, arriving in Chicago at 4.30pm. The fare is £80 return. If he wanted to catch an onward connection to New York, he would have to wait seven hours for the next train. The cost from Hutchinson to New York would be about £200 (with a sleeping compartment for the first 20 hours).

If he wants to go west from Great Bend to Los Angeles, he again has a choice - of one train. He has to drive 90 miles to Dodge City to catch the 7.20 am train via Albuquerque, arriving in LA at 7.20 am next day.

● Electrification of Amtrak's Northeast Corridor is proceeding apace, with 253 kilometres of double-track main line between New Haven and Boston being wired up for 25kV services at a cost of £200 million. It is part of a plan to upgrade the whole route between New York and Boston.

● Work has also started on reopening three commuter routes in Boston which closed in 1959. It is costing £320 million.

● The Californian city of Oakland is considering using 114 kilometres of a Southern Pacific freight-only line to Fairfield and Brentwood as a commuter route.

● An international conference on railways will be held at Wembley on 25-27 May next year. There will be sessions on freight, high-speed railways, regional railways, urban transit and new technologies. Details from Sue Fry 071 839 9801.

● Your chance to hear Eurotunnel chairman Sir Alastair Morton comes at the Railway Development Society's annual general meeting at the Stour Centre, Ashford, Kent, on 1 May.

A welcome back to the valleys

But not for penny-pinchers

By Ian Hurray

Passengers have been flocking to the new South Wales rail service launched at the start of the winter timetable.

After long and hard campaigning by RDS Wales and Transport 2000, our vision has at last come to fruition - bringing trains back to Maesteg after a 22-year suspension.

They have been very busy, with standing room only on some services.

Demand was so strong in the first week that intending passengers had to be turned away.

The second week saw the preposterous provision of buses by BR to carry the people who could not fit into the trains.

The scheme was funded by Mid Glamorgan County Council and the European Community. It involved building four branch line stations and two stations on the main line section of the route between Cardiff and Bridgend. Two extra stations, Maesteg Ewenny Road and Wildmill (near Bridgend) will be open by the end of the year.

The Government's involvement was to impose such strict spending restraints that only £4 million could be spent on the project, resulting in minimal signalling changes and branch line platforms long enough for just two-car trains.

Relief trains to Maesteg or longer trains are therefore out of the question.

Plans to increase the line's capacity are not likely to be implemented for months or even years.

The present service is hourly between Cardiff and Maesteg. The main line stations of Pen-coed and Pontyclun benefit from some extra trains as well as a limited Sunday service from Regional Railways trains heading from Cardiff to West Wales.

Feeder bus links from neighbouring valleys to Tondy are to commence shortly.

A train journey along this line is certainly very worthwhile. Maesteg (Fair Field) is situated at the head of the very picturesque and wide Llynfi Valley and the train journey is a very pleasant experience. Full marks to Mid Glamorgan County Council for putting its faith in the expansion of rail services.

The Maesteg service could be the jewel in the crown of the Valleys services, according to Councillor Bryan Fitzgerald, chairman of the highways and transport committee.

He said he was delighted to see that the council's money had been so well invested.

The new stations, in regional colours, are very well designed and the new Pacer units travel well on the almost straight track within the valley. The line was opened officially by the Duke of Gloucester on 30 October.

A *reopenings conference* is to be held in May or June at Maesteg. We will be able to hear how the passenger service to this town was restored and what can be learnt from it. We will also discuss other issues relevant to reopenings throughout Britain.

Details will be available early in the New Year. If you are interested and would like full details, please send an SAE to general secretary Trevor Garrod.

We are poised to step up our campaigning for lines to be reopened and new railways built - fuelled by the £1250 proceeds from our successful national draw.

Cash has been made available to our Midlands



A tonic for Tondy: Trains prove popular with both young and old! Picture: Rhodri Clark

branch for its work in encouraging and supporting Centro, the passenger transport authority, in its ambitious reopening plans for the Birmingham area.

The East Anglian branch has also received funding for its latest leaflet updating the case for restoring the St Ives line to the passenger network.

Meanwhile our Yorkshire branch has, with help from the draw proceeds, launched a campaign for a restored passenger service between Doncaster and Knottingley via Askern.

Askern is a classic example of a somewhat isolated one-industry community, in this case mining, which has lost its *raison d'être* and would benefit from a rail service to aid regeneration. The experience of Bathgate and Maesteg is relevant.

Resources are also being put into Wessex, where our branch has long been pressing for a passenger service over the Eastleigh - Romsey line via Chandlers Ford and is supporting the Swanage Railway Society's bid to run trains from Wareham.

Financial support is also being given towards the efforts of our individual and corporate members in the East Midlands to secure a proper East - West link. RDS has also formed a

reopenings and new railways working party with 10 members from around the country, to advise and co-ordinate these campaigns. The chairman is Trevor Garrod, with Reg Snow as secretary.

The working party is also undertaking other projects, including a study of the rail alternatives to widening the M25 and how abandoned trackbeds can be preserved where there is a case for reopening.

We are also trying to build up an easily accessible body of material that can be used by local campaigners. This should include information on costings, market research and the benefits brought by lines and stations already opened.

Alan Bevan is drawing together information on what material RDS members around the country have on such topics. He would be pleased to hear from anyone who can help. Please write to him at 12 Morris Field Croft, Hall Green, Birmingham B28 0RN.

The only publication listing all new and reopened stations with much relevant information on costings is the RDS booklet *A to Z of Rail Reopenings*. It also sets out the projects RDS believes are important for the future. The book costs £5.45 post free from sales officer Alan Harwood, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN.

Greedy roads eat up Fife's cash

By Jane Ann Liston

Bringing the trains back to St Andrews would present no insuperable engineering problems, campaigners have been told by a railway manager. But Fife Regional Council needs to become involved in the scheme, said Paul Hadley, service group manager of ScotRail.

So far the council, which is the public transport authority, has rejected even the idea of a feasibility study.

Money is, however, being spent on a feasibility study for the much more expensive option of a second Forth road bridge, points out Starlink, which is fighting to bring back the trains.

North East Fife District Council has, by contrast, allocated £5,000 towards a study into bringing back the trains. It can see the obvious

benefit of St Andrews having trains to Dundee and Edinburgh. Mr Hadley, who has been involved with several line reopenings, walked the five miles from the former Milton Junction to the Old Course Hotel. Starlink is now urging the political parties in St Andrews to lobby the Regional Council to provide cash for a feasibility study.

The group accepts that the new service might have to take a slightly different route. Some residents at Edenside, Guardbridge, are opposed to the trains and want to build houses on the trackbed. Excavations have begun even though planning permission has not been given.

Other residents of Guardside are more worried by two competing bus companies - which carry rail passengers to St Andrews - driving along narrow residential roads.

WESTMINSTER WATCH

New opportunities

"I am very pleased that we have this opportunity to debate the White Paper New Opportunities for the Railways, said Transport Secretary John MacGregor on 29 OCTOBER.

The proposals were designed to make further substantial improvements in the way British Rail meets the modern needs of customers, both passengers and freight. They were as significant a turning point as the nationalisation of railways in 1948. One of the problems was the appearance of too great an expectation of when things would begin to happen. People believed in franchises and therefore believed that franchises would come about immediately.

"I will introduce the primary legislation towards the end of next month or thereabouts. I hope that we will be able to achieve Royal Assent some time in the summer of 1993," John Prescott (Labour, Kingston-upon-Hull East) said that was an exciting introduction to new opportunities for the railway industry. "I have always had doubts about if we shall ever consider the Bill. We have had it in Queen's speeches, and it has been taken out of Queen's speeches. Now we await the Bill with some interest.

"Our railways are cost-effective. I add only that the system should also be safe. That is not stated as one of the objectives, although the White Paper mentions the idea of a safe railway system. The many terrible tragedies that we have witnessed have shown that safety standards have not been high enough."

Robert Adley warns

Robert Adley (Conservative, Nistchurch) said: "Let no-one ever forget the Railways Act 1921, brought into effect by a Conservative Government in 1923, which reduced from 112 to four the number of railway companies, because of the chaotic state into which excessive competition had brought the railway system."

He had been jotting down notes about a possible future privatisation of the Ministry of Defence. Who would build the European fighter aircraft?

That was not a wholly stupid analogy. Who would pay for the introduction of new railway technol-

ogy in Britain? Where would our equivalent to the Shinkansen lines, the TGV in France and the ICE in Germany, come from? If we did not get that clear, in the next few years we should be spending an endless amount of time discussing an ever-declining railway system — not something he wanted to see.

"We have had 13 years of Conservative Government, when the failure of former Secretaries of State, such as Lords Ridley, Moore and Parkinson, to produce any White Paper on railway privatisation was the result not of a lack of enthusiasm but a lack of ability to find a workable system." Services were run because of the social need for them. Competitive bidding alone was totally inadequate for people who wanted to see railway services continuing in Cornwall, Scotland, Wales and right across the rural areas of England and on the commuter lines.

No more Beechings

"The only body to be excluded from the bidding to run trains in future in Britain will be the only body with any experience of running trains — British Rail. Even in local authority tendering, public works departments are at least allowed to tender." Why was there dissatisfaction with BR? To many interested in railways, it was the familiar pattern of closures in the post-Beeching era. The timetable was disrupted and connections destroyed. The outcome was reduced income, increased costs and then closure. "Many of us are not prepared to see that happen again.

"If things are so bad on BR — and we can all find improvements — it is because of bad management, the reduction in the PSO Grant, or the unfair competitive position of rail versus road. None of that is mentioned in the White Paper, and those issues need to be attended to before we come to any conclusions."

What Japan does

There was no mention in the White Paper of taxation policies. Japan's railways were not privatised. It had six regional monopolies, all state owned, but the success of the Japanese railways was due not just to the huge investment but to the fact that 80 per cent of travellers had their taxes paid for them by their employers and the other 20 per cent

had tax allowances on their fares.

"That is the exact reverse of what happens here.

"If we were to use our taxation policy as the Japanese do, our railways would succeed. The Germans use tax policies to offer incentives for the use of rail freight. If we did the same, that would go a long way towards helping our railway system, but nothing like that is proposed anywhere.

"We simply cannot go on debating in the House setting up all these quangos, while giving BR no continuity of rolling stock investment and allowing our manufacturers to go to the wall. Not only that, but our railway services will go to pot."

Little enthusiasm

Peter Snape (Lab, West Bromwich East) said he had seldom, in almost 20 years in the House, known a Bill to be welcomed with so many reservations. Some of the earlier enthusiasm for the Bill expressed by Conservative members was rapidly qualified as it dawned on them that it was, perhaps, not such a good thing. The problem about any rational discussion with ministers about the future of the railway system was that they appeared to be motivated entirely by an ideology and dogma that would have seemed quaint and unrealistic even to the much-vaunted Victorians who built our railway system in the first place.

The danger of the nonsensical exercise in the White Paper was that it would be done to a railway system already rotting away after 13 years of hostility and indifference by Secretaries of State who had come and gone faster than the Gatwick Express during that period.

Despite the popular view that anyone can run a railway — a view obviously shared by the Thomas the Tank Engine personalities who inhabit the Department of Transport — it is an enormously complex system.

Pride in railways

Many thousands of people co-operate together to provide a service for passengers and freight for the public and the country. It works as well as it does only because all those people share that goal and are pulling in the same direction.

It might be hard for the Conservative Party to realise in these cynical days, the fact that most of the people involved in our railway system shared a sense of achievement at the end of a successful working day. All shared a sense of pride in the railway

industry, which not even 13 years of attack by successive Secretaries of State had reduced.

"We believe that the most likely outcome of the proposals for freight transport will bring even more joy to the Road Haulage Association, despite the fond hopes expressed by Conservative members. It is no more expensive to carry freight by rail under the new regime, when subsidies to rail freight will be forbidden, just as they are now.

"Rail freight is not subsidised, although in the opinion of many of us, given railways' enormous environmental benefits, it should be. At the moment, however, freight enjoys a favourable charging regime on the railway network — although nowhere as favourable as that granted to road operators. Where freight trains share track with passenger trains, by and large they bear only the marginal costs of the track and signalling along the route."

Private operators

It was impossible to imagine that such a system would continue when a multiplicity of private operators were seeking to work freight trains in the way the State fondly imagines they will. "Look at what has happened over the past year, while ministers have said that freight would be transferred from road to rail."

The past 12 months had been the collapse and withdrawal of the Speedlink wagon-load network from BR. Lines between Cambridge and Fen Drayton, Yate and Lytherington and Alves and Burghhead in Scotland had all closed. Others were expected to close later this year.

If this was the experience of rail freight under the present regime, how much worse would matters be "once this nonsense was implemented"?

The whole track charging regime was shrouded in mist — "even denser than that which surrounds the Government's economic strategy."

Nigel Spearing (Lab, Newham South) asked in a written question on 22 OCTOBER to the Transport Secretary to request the BR Board to report on the practicability of introducing a rail service between Clapham and Willesden Junction over the West London line.

Roger Freeman replied that the subject was being examined by a working group of officials representing BR, London boroughs and the local business community.



The financial carve-up



As usual, the road lobby did very nicely out of the Chancellor's autumn financial statement on November 12 while the railways got the cold shoulder - again.

Forty road schemes will start next year as planned. No rail schemes were given the go-ahead.

The special tax on new cars was scrapped, cutting the price of an average car by £400 and providing yet another financial incentive for the most polluting and anti-social form of transport.

Norman Lamont's idea of "kickstarting" the economy was to make even more money available for road schemes from local council funds.

London Transport general investment was cut by one third over the next three years. Though approved in theory, the Jubilee line extension still depends on whether private sector money is forthcoming. The shilly-shallying continues.

BR spending plans are cut by a half over the next three years and Thameslink 2000, the West Coast Main Line and the Heathrow airport link are just some of the rail projects ignored.

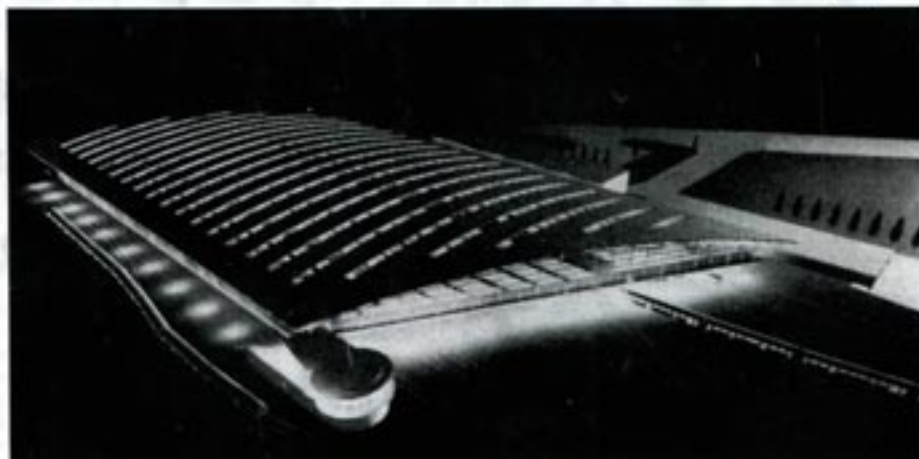
As he made his speech in the Commons, Mr Lamont was flanked by Chief Secretary to the Treasury Michael Portillo who did not exactly sparkle when he was a public transport minister under Mrs Thatcher.

But the Government's mean team did throw a few measly crumbs of comfort to the railways before they sped off in their limousines. British Rail is to be allowed to lease, rather than buy, up to £150 million worth of rolling stock. The French - and Labour's John Prescott - came up with that idea years ago.

NEWSWATCH

Political action: Tory MP Teresa Gorman was fined £55 for driving at 50 mph in a 30 mph zone. At the time she appeared in court in October, the Government was running a campaign urging drivers to "Kill your speed. Not a child".

It was spending large amounts of our money to remind drivers that most children are killed when they are involved in accidents with cars



Still waiting for market forces: The Jubilee line train depot planned for Stratford Market

going at 40 mph. At 30 mph half are killed and at 20 mph one child in 20 is killed. The Department of Transport admits that Britain's record on child pedestrian road safety is bad.

Then in November Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke reportedly told police not to "hound" motorists. He questioned the need for spy cameras to catch speeding drivers and appeared to be giving a signal that speeding should become a less serious offence.

After taking over the Department of Transport and the Treasury, the road lobby seems to be moving in at the Home Office.

Line at risk: British Steel is to send limestone traffic on a circuitous 115-mile route from Shap to Redcar rather than continue to use its existing 40-mile route from Redmire.

Its decision could well be the death knell for the line and wreck hopes of extending and reopening it for passengers from Northallerton to Garsdale (on the Settle to Carlisle).

This is a perfect example of short term expediency and long-term stupidity, typical of British transport planning over the last 40 years.

At least 20,800 lorries a year are kept off the roads - thanks to the operation of just one train.

The 36 90-tonne wagons leave Bardonia Hill quarry each working day carrying crushed rock to London.

At least 18,780 oil tanker lorries a year are kept off the road thanks to the operation of one train. The 22 90-tonne wagons leave Lindsey refinery, near Immingham six days a week for Colwick, Notts.

One freight train can carry as much as 117 40-

tonne lorries (the legal maximum). Meanwhile expect more foreign juggernauts on the road following the European Community decision to abolish permits and quotas on international road haulage from January. Most people want freight back on the rails! The Government claims it does too.

Outposts of sanity: Nottinghamshire County Council is planning to spend £15 million to improve local rail services.

Scotland's Central Region has cut 22 new road schemes and is to concentrate spending on buses, bikes and trains.

The Ramblers' Association organised special walks based on the Heart of Wales line between Swansea and Shrewsbury where new 153 units were welcomed by passengers. On the Conwy Valley line however the 153s are causing problems for cyclists who are now unable to use the train for family days out.

The Barmouth to Pwllheli line celebrated its 125th anniversary with the introduction of Pwllheli to Birmingham trains.

You can help RDS by leaving leaflets at stations, preserved railways, pubs, cafes, garden centres etc. Please always ask permission before doing so. The following leaflets are available: Channel Tunnel - What must be Done. Don't break up BR, Making Tracks (Railfreight), Railways and the Environment, Switch on our Trains (electrification), What the Sun did NOT print, Why I joined RDS. They are available free from the Publicity Officer, Latymer, The Drive, Belmont, Surrey SM2 7DJ. Please state how many you want and make a contribution towards postage.

Get staffed: The problems of unstaffed stations are highlighted in a booklet called Get Staffed published by the London Regional Passengers Committee. The rail unions believe most stations will be "destaffed" after privatisation.

Meanies: Rail usage increased by 12 per cent during Birmingham's Don't Choke the City day. The Government responded by refusing to give the city the money to build its Metro.

The new plague: Cars have killed as many people in the 20th century as the plague in the 14th century. Cars also account for around half of all air pollution.

Balance of payments drain: Britain imported £1,419 million worth more cars than we exported.

Catalytic converters remove minute amounts of serious pollutants from car exhausts, but their manufacture creates more pollution than they will ever remove from the car. *Letter in New Cyclist 9.92.*

Railwatch is edited by Ray King, 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU (Tel 081 985 8548)

Assistant editor: George Cooper, 86 Jubilee Court, Bracknell, Berks RG12 3QR

Circulation: James Apsley, Hillside House, Acle, Norwich NR13 3DH

Subscription supplies (£3.30 annually): Alan Cocker, 11 Franklin Road, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 9DX

All copy for the next issue, to be published in March, must be in the hands of Mr King by 29 January

Published by the Railway Development Society, an independent voluntary body

General Secretary: Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 1RQ (Tel 0502 581721)

Administration: Reg Snow, 48 The Park, Great Bookham, Leatherhead, Surrey KT23 3LS (Tel 0372 452863)

Sales: Alan Harwood, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN

Press officer: David Pickersgill, 171 Lower Oxford Street, Castleford, Yorkshire WF10 4AQ (Tel 0977 510909)

Publicity officer: Roland White, Latymer, The Drive, Belmont, Surrey SM2 7DJ (for free publicity leaflets)

Membership Secretary: Frank Haslow, 49 Imham Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands B74 2TQ (Tel 021 308 2865). Membership: £10 per year; pensioners, students and unemployed £5; user groups and parish councils £10; other local authorities £30; companies £40. Families £1 extra per member, after £10.

Printed by Print-Out, High Street, Histon, Cambridge CB4 4JD (Tel: 0223 232709)

ISSN 0267-5943