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The Very Rev. J. H. S. Wild, M.A., Dean of Durham

Torquil Nicolson Esq., B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E.

P R O G R E S S R E P O R TNo. 96SEPTEMBER 1973THE WAY AHEAD

✓ X The review of rail policy sent to the Government in June by the British Railways Board, advocating the retention of the railway system at about its present size of 11,500 miles, was followed by a statement in July by Mr. John Peyton, Minister for Transport Industries, that "draconian cuts" were not the answer to British Rail's difficulties. Thus, at long last would appear to have ended the speculation that more closures of Beeching proportions were on the way. The Board's forthright statement on this and the need for greatly increased investment in the railways, although long overdue, could well herald the beginning of a new railway era and the end of those negative policies that have bedevilled railway development for the past decade.

It is too early, however, to take more than a hopeful view of these statements. They do not preclude some closures. However, with the system already overpressed, the lopping of only a few hundred more route miles could have serious effects on the ability of the railways to provide a comprehensive national transport system. Furthermore, the policy plan has one major disappointment in that it envisages a reduction in freight business, because of a drastic drop in wagonload traffic. Such a trend should not be taken as inevitable, since much could be done to increase this type of business, e. g., by providing more private sidings and encouraging more rapid and reliable transits. Since the traffic suitable for single wagonload conveyance constitutes a major proportion of the national freight market, this aspect of freight policy needs very careful consideration by both the Railways Board and the Government.

Mr. Peyton has said that he has no intention of directing freight on to the railways by legislation. However, the Government does in effect direct traffic of all kinds by influencing market forces as a result of its control over the purse strings of transport investment. Thus, during the past few years, whereas railway investment has been static, hundreds of millions of pounds have been spent on building new roads. This can only lead to the drawing of traffic away from rail. The increasing public resistance to the expansion of road construction, coupled with the possibility of future increased costs, and reduction in availability of oil fuels, now demands a new approach. Capital spent on railways to finance electrification, track improvements, provision of freight and passenger terminals and restoration of key routes would be a much better investment of taxpayers' money than the provision of costly new roads. Building of the latter would perpetuate the present transport imbalance by providing trunk route capacity which could well prove superfluous in the not-too-distant future. X

LEWES-UCKFIELD LINE: POSSIBLE RE-OPENING

✓x On 17th July, a meeting organised by East Sussex County Council was held in Lewes to discuss a report on the possible re-opening of the Lewes to Uckfield railway line. The report had been prepared by the County Surveyor and the County Planning Officer. It quoted a British Rail estimate of the cost of reinstating the line, if intermediate stations were re-opened, of up to £2,000,000.

The meeting was chaired by the chairman of the Highways and Transportation Committee of the present County Council, which ceases to exist on 31st March, 1974. Among the approximately 40 people present were the full transport sub-committee of the Highways Committee of the new County Council, which will become operative from 1st April next year. Also present were representatives of 25 interested organisations, including the local authorities concerned. Mr. R. V. Banks (Press and Publicity Officer of the Railway Inivogation Society) represented the Lewes-Uckfield Joint Railway Committee, which is supported by the RIS, Railway Development Association, National Council on Inland Council, and East Sussex Passengers' Association.

Many representatives, including Mr. Banks, spoke at the meeting and their consensus of opinion was in favour of reinstating the line.

All organisations represented have been invited by the County Council to submit written comments or information to the Council by the end of this month (September). The Council intends to prepare a revised report and to submit this to the organisations at a meeting in November. The idea is to assist the new County Council in the working out of its transport policy.

An excellent editorial in the Sussex Express and County Herald (20th July, 1973) stated: "The policy in this country seems to be to spend millions on new roads but neglect a system which has proved its worth for 100 years. It is accepted that by-passes are needed to safeguard our ancient towns from heavy traffic, but the value of some new roads may be questioned both on the grounds of cost and safety ... The railway network covers a large part of the country and is an accepted feature of the environment. Better use should be made of it, even if subsidies are needed." x

ASHFORD-HASTINGS LINE: VICTORY IN SIGHT?

✓x East Sussex County Council is prepared to subsidy the Ashford to Hastings railway line, but only if Kent County Council agrees to meet half the cost. The total initial cost is estimated at £450,000 and the subsequent annual cost at £200,000. The present East Sussex County Council also wants financial help from the Department of the Environment towards the carrying out of capital works necessary to put the line in order and an assurance of support from the new County Council. x

"TRANSPORT DISINTEGRATED"

We are very pleased to draw the attention of our readers to the book with the above title which has just been published by its author, Mr. Roger Calvert, M.A., M.C.I.T., at 396 City

Road, London, EC1V 2QA. Price at £3 (post free), the book is obtainable direct from the author. Mr. Calvert will be known as the energetic secretary, for the past ten years, of the National Council on Inland Transport, a body to which the Railway Inigation Society is affiliated. (Dr. M. P. L. Caton, Chairman of the RIS, is Vice-Chairman of the NCIT. Mr. R. V. Banks, Press and Publicity officer of the RIS, is a member of the committee of the NCIT.)

According to the preface by Lord Kinnoul, "this book argues the case for railways and waterways. That they are the most economic means of transport when all the costs are added. That they are the only means of transport that give a decent environment for living in a country such as Great Britain, having regard to (i) the present population and (ii) future increased population. The book also attempts to compute the effect (i) on railway and waterway finances and (ii) on the social and economic fabric of Great Britain of the anti-rail and anti-waterway transport policy pursued for two decades by successive governments." It should be noted, however, that "the views expressed in the book are those of the author and are not necessarily those of the National Council on Inland Transport."

The book is head and shoulders above the majority of the many we have seen on the transport crisis. It is probably the most detailed of all in its arguments and it provides a most valuable source of information for all who wish to retain and expand the railways of this country. The present tyranny exercised by the motor vehicle is fully examined and the myths held by the motor lobby thoroughly exploded.

BRITISH RAIL FREIGHT TRAFFIC: FORTHCOMING SOCIETY MEETING

✓ X The Society will hold a lecture meeting at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, on Wednesday, 24th October at 7 p.m. Mr. John Ogilvie, C. Eng., M. I. M. Mech. E., an honorary member of the Society, will talk on new ideas for developing freight traffic on British Rail. X

CHANNEL TUNNEL

Transport 2,000 held a meeting in Canterbury on 27th June to discuss the Channel Tunnel project. The speakers were Dr. L. Taitz, of Sheffield, and Mr. H. J. Iron, Works Manager, Ashford Railway Works.

The following resolution was passed:-

"This meeting of Transport 2,000 supports a rail Channel link project, but calls for a co-ordinating authority to be established to ensure that road traffic generated is controlled to protect the environment."

MR. JOHN ARLOTT

We congratulate Mr. John Arlott, who is one of our vice-presidents, upon the receipt of an honorary master of arts degree from Southampton University. Mr. Arlott, who is Cricket Correspondent of the Guardian, is a frequent broadcaster.

NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

We welcome the following new corporate members:-

Fylde Rural District Council (Lancashire) : Fielden and Mawson, architects, Norwich.

IN PARLIAMENTSelections from the official reportsHouse of CommonsQuestions and answers

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment

An asterisk denotes an oral answer; those not so marked were written.

* 28th March Fleet line Mr. Thomas Cox (Wandsworth, Central) asked the SSE/what proposals he is considering to extend the Fleet railway line service to outer London boroughs. The Minister for Transport Industries (Mr. John Peyton) None, sir. Mr. Cox But is not the Minister aware of the appalling conditions that thousands who either work or live in south-east London have to face, day in and day out, and of the urgent need to extend facilities in that area? Mr. Peyton I have recently appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Sir David Barran to look into the whole of London's railway movement, and I look forward to having that knowledgeable report (see also last progress report, p. 11).

2nd April Railways Mr. David Clark (Colne Valley) asked the SSE if he will publish the details of the formula used in deciding the amount of grant to be made available to a particular railway line under the Transport Act, 1968. Mr. Peyton I am considering this in the rail policy review.

Mr. Body (Holland with Boston) asked the SSE whether the proposed regulation in the EEC COM (72) 1717 final, dated 26th February, 1973, if adopted, would have any effect upon the existing grants made to the British Railways Board to maintain uneconomic services. Mr. Peyton No.

9th April Railway systems (EEC countries) Mr. David Price (Eastleigh) asked the SSE to what extent it is possible for British Rail freight wagons and freight cars to run on the rail systems of the member countries of the EEC; how far it is possible for freight wagons and freight cars of the other EEC railways to run on the British rail system; and what is his estimate of the capital cost of so modifying the British rail system to accommodate freight wagons and freight cars to run on the entire British rail system. Mr. Peyton British freight wagons can run over the Continental rail system provided they are air-braked and otherwise conform to agreed standards; EEC rolling stock can run here only if built within the restricted British loading gauge. The cost of modifying the British system would be very high.

10th April Railway freight Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Walthamstow, East) asked the SSE whether he will give figures of the tonnage of freight carried by British Rail on an annual basis since 1968 and its value to the corporation also on a yearly basis. Mr. Peyton The figures are as follows:-

	Million tons	£million revenue
1968	207	188
1969	207	197
1970	206	208

	Million tons	£million revenue
1971	196	194
1972 (provisional)	169	184

11th April Railways (financial support) Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Walthamstow, East) asked the SSE what per cent of British Rail's route network is in receipt of social needs subsidy and if he will list, region by region, the amount of financial support being provided by his Department to British Rail. Mr. Peyton Grants are made for loss-making passenger services and not for the route network. In 1972 they were as follows:-

	£million
Eastern Region	14,143 *
London Midland Region	11,925 X
Scottish Region	12,245
Southern Region	13,150
Western Region	7,239

* plus 90 per cent of passenger transport executive contribution, which is £1,190 million
X plus 90 per cent of passenger transport executive contribution, which is £7,125 million.

11th May Railways Mr. Skeet (Bedford) asked the SSE whether he will consider seeking to arrive at a European solution for the problems and policies of British Railways rather than a national solution as postulated in the transport of the United Kingdom; and whether he will consider working towards the formation of a multi-European transport company incorporating both State and private participation. Mr. Peyton I am taking full account of EEC factors in reviewing railway policy.

Freight haulage Mr. Sillars (Ayshire, South) asked the SSE what was the percentage of goods hauled by road and rail in 1972; and how this compares with the period 1960 to 1971. Mr. Peyton The following are the figures:-

FREIGHT TRAFFIC IN GREAT BRITAIN 1960 - 1972

Mode	Actual												million tons	
	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972 ⁺	
Road	1192	1240	1248	1385	1535	1565	1615	1625	1680	1690	1695	1735	1698	
Rail	249	238	228	235	240	229	214	201	207	207	205	196	175	
Other *	57	61	64	74	78	87	91	87	94	98	101	105	106	
Total	1498	1539	1540	1694	1853	1881	1920	1913	1981	1995	2001	2036	1979	
Percentage														
Road	79	81	81	82	83	83	84	85	85	85	85	85	86	
Rail	17	15	15	14	13	12	11	11	10	10	10	10	9	
Other *	4	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	

* "Other" consists of coastal shipping, pipelines and inland waterways. + Provisional or estimated.

* 11th May Fleet line Mr. Moyle (Lewisham, North) asked the SSE when he proposes to make a decision on the construction of the Fleet line to Lewisham. Mr. Rippon After we have seen the London Rail Study's report, Mr. Moyle Will the right hon. and learned Gentleman bear in mind that the Fleet line is an essential part of a decent public transport system in south-east London and Lewisham and that, as we are not now to have Ringway 1, people will expect the Government to devote all the released resources to building the Fleet line? Mr. Rippon All the various factors will be taken into account. Stages 2 and 3 of the Fleet line, including all the options, were discussed in the dockland study, but, as the team said, it is not any essential part of the study. It would be wise to await the report of the study.

14th May High-speed trains Mr. Michael McNair-Wilson (Walthamstow, East) asked the SSE what investment in new rolling stock will be required to enable the advanced passenger train to be introduced by British Rail; and whether the existing rolling stock, unmodified, can be used with the high-speed train. Mr. Peyton Investment in APT stock depends on future decisions about the programme. The high-speed diesels can draw existing MKIII coaches, with minor modifications.

Mr. McNair-Wilson asked the SSE when he expects the first high-speed train to go into service with British Rail; and if he will make a statement on the high-speed train programme to date. Mr. Peyton The Board hopes that a prototype train will enter service later this year.

23rd May Wales (railways) Mr. Elystan Morgan asked the SSE (1) what is the total amount of grant now being paid on account of loss-making railway lines in Wales; (2) how many miles of railway track there are in Wales in respect of which grants are now being paid for passenger services under the Transport Act, 1968. Mr. Peyton Approximately 810 route miles and £4.9 million.

(This feature has been curtailed so as to make room for other material of importance. However, endeavour will be made to bring coverage up-to-date in our next issue. Ed.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(for conditions of acceptance, see previous progress report, p. 9)

Combining electrification with diesel working

Need for more rail electrification is repeatedly stressed, but I assume that British Rail's apparently rather slow pace in providing this is set by the very high and, of course, ever-increasing cost of materials, such as high-conductivity steel and insulators in the case of third rail. It has often occurred to me that a way of combining electrification of an exceptionally low-cost kind with diesel working, without any changeover delays to through trains, might be useful in some areas.

Briefly, it would involve operating traffic as far as possible with push-pull trains, consisting of an existing diesel loco and from 6 carriages upwards, the end one fitted with driving

controls. The first 6 vehicles next to the engine would have a central collector skate or skates running the length of the vehicle and wired through to the diesel loco's traction motors. Whenever traffic density justified it, "electrification" would consist of an insulated stud mounted between the rails, its top surface at third rail height, i.e., 9 ins. above the running rails, at distances of about 100 yards apart. Thus some part of each set would always contact at least one stud. On running off the electrified zone, trains would use the last two or three studs to start their diesel engines (saving the battery) and drive on in normal way to their destination.

Two other advantages over third rail. Firstly, the very large leakage to earth of the third rail system, in wet weather especially, would be eliminated; and, secondly, icing-up would be minimised.

Patent has been applied for as regards the rail or rapid transit application of this system.

J. A. Butler,
 Mem. Inst. Patentees & Inventors,
 (Hon. Technical Adviser, Wessex Br.)
 Sunnymead, Winchester Road,
 Waltham Chase, Southampton.

"Is this what the local populace really desire?"

I, like every member of the RIS, am becoming thoroughly sick and tired by the childish stand being adopted by the Economist newspaper. Their views make it crystal clear that to allow businessmen and economists to be in charge of public services (and, in my view, to be in Parliament in the first place) is an undesirable thing. These people have no comprehension of social requirements and this fact alone renders them socially not to be required.

Secondly, I turn to the closure of the Alston-Haltwhistle line, scheduled for 1975. It is pathetic that this railway is to be replaced by a road. Is this what the local populace really desire? Has anybody bothered to ask them? If the MP for the area is worth one-tenth of the salary he is being paid, he will be badgering the Minister for Transport Industries, publicly and privately, in Parliament and out of it, to reverse his decision. Every year when snow falls road accesses to Alston are cut off. At all costs - literally, at all costs, this line must not close. If this fight is not won, I believe that no secondary railway throughout the length and breadth of Great Britain is safe from Peyton's axe.

Lastly, I turn to Parliament. In February, Rear-Admiral Morgan-Giles, the MP for Winchester, asked the Minister if he would delay the disposal of track on the Alton-Winchester line pending the examination of the suitability of replacement bus services. What did the Minister do to help the Hampshire inhabitants in this matter? Did he show that he was genuinely concerned about their transport problems? Did he in fact come in any way to the aid of the Rear-Admiral's constituents? Let the reader judge from the Minister's reply: "The Railways Board is free to dispose of the track as soon as services are withdrawn, unless someone pays it not to."

John Snell, LL. B.,
 55, Almond Avenue, Swanpool, Lincoln, LN6 0HB.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREASBRANCHESLondon and Home Counties

- ✓ X Blackfriars station, London, closed down in July and is to be replaced by a new station which will incorporate an office block. The new complex will be completed in 3½ years' time. In the meantime, passengers who travel to and from Blackfriars will use a temporary station in a subway built through the arches under the old station.

There is much building in progress on the Underground. On the Fleet line, work is now well advanced. Strand station closed from 16th June and will re-open in 1976. It will be joined to Trafalgar Square station and renamed Charing Cross. The present Charing Cross station will revert to the name Embankment. Russell Square station is to be closed for six months so that improvements costing £1m. may be carried out. Debden (Essex) station is being completely rebuilt. X

- ✓ X Several events in south Essex warrant mention. Work has started on a new station at Basildon and is expected to be completed by May of next year. On the Southminster branch, traffic has very much increased. British Rail is considering the provision of longer trains and, in some quarters, electrification of the line has been suggested. Woodham Ferrers, until recently a village, is now a town of 15,000 inhabitants and there is a scheme for expansion to the south of the railway which would add 17,500 people. Indicative of the expanding use of the line is that British Rail is to restore a Sunday service from 12th August. This is to run for an experimental period and BR is to be guaranteed against loss by local authorities. A timetable for the passenger service on the Witham-Braintree line has been issued jointly by the local action committee (formed ten years ago) and British Rail. X

St. Albans City station (Herts.) has been rebuilt, on the site of the old goods yard, at a cost of £210,000. At Dartford (Kent), reconstruction of the station is progressing well.

This year the Sunday service on the Slough-Windsor line started on 4th March! If patronisation proves satisfactory, the service will be continued throughout the year.

(other news from the Home Counties is on p. 2.)

East Anglian

- ✓ X The Branch broke new ground by organising a public meeting at March (Cambs.) on 23rd June. Mr. R. V. Banks, Press and Publicity Officer of the Railway Invigoration Society, spoke on "Railways in the 70s" and Mr. H. Garton, the local NUR secretary, dealt with the future of public transport, particularly rail, in the Fens. A long report subsequently appeared in the local press. Two of the March representatives present hope to organise a further meeting and campaign. X

Resulting from a questionnaire to members, the Branch is currently investigating several ways in which local rail services can be improved. In particular, we feel that more excursions

should run, or cheap return fares offered, in connection with local football matches. The Branch is approaching British Rail with suggestions.

The Branch has been in touch with British Rail divisional management re facilities at certain local stations, including the possibility of resiting Haddiscoe station (Norwich-Lowestoft line) near the main road bridge. British Rail stated that the cost would be £900 and that the move would be considered only if the local authorities were willing to pay.

✓ X The long-awaited British rail campaign to boost local pay-train patronage started on 10th July. Five East Anglian pay-train services have been given names and distinctive colours (similar to the West Riding scheme). Books of tickets can be bought whereby travellers save 10% of their fares - an encouragement to those who do not travel regularly enough to make having a season ticket worthwhile. Several other bargains are being introduced to make family travel more attractive. X

✓ X The Branch has participated in a series of meetings in Cambridge to set up a local Transport 2,000 organisation. Conservationists, amenity bodies and local councils are also concerned. Arising from this movement, the Branch was well represented at a conference called by Transport 2,000, East Anglia at Ely on 28th July. This was attended by fifty people. Mr. Gordon Clarke, Divisional Manager of British Rail, gave a lively talk on the railways' role in the area's transport, the constraints upon British Rail and its plans for the future. He also stressed the increased responsibility of the reorganised local authorities for public transport, as did the other speaker, Mr. D. E. Sayburn, Transport Co-ordinating Officer of Cambridgeshire County Council. Mention was also made of the St. Ives line re-opening proposal and some of those present questioned the size of British Rail's estimate of the cost of re-opening. X

Investigations by a Beccles (Suffolk) member suggests that heavy through traffic on the roads costs this town (population, with Worlingham, 10,000) £296,000 per year. The cost to the whole country on this basis would be £1628 million. "For only a fraction of this enormous, wasteful cost," wrote Mr. Hunter to the local press, "the railways could be put in order and take this menace from the roads."

Three Counties

✓ X We much regret that the attempt to promote a regular summer weekend passenger service operating between Gloucester and Stratford-upon-Avon has so far produced disappointment, owing to lack of support from the general public. Without the patronage of railway enthusiasts, particularly members of the Dowty Railway Preservation Society, a heavy loss would have been incurred on the trial service run by the Branch on 13th June.

The venture was plagued with bad luck. Industrial disputes prevented publication of two editions of the Gloucestershire Echo which were to have carried details of the service. A promised window display at the West Midlands Tourist Board's office in Stratford did not materialise, although the Board gave full support to the service in other ways. On the day itself, the heavens opened! It rained more or less continuously until late in the afternoon.

However, with just a handful of exceptions, all passengers complimented us on every aspect

of the service. Hitches and problems were few and the assistance and co-operation of British Rail is much appreciated. An interest-incident was the discovery of an American tourist, "doing Europe", who had been directed on to our service as being the most efficient way for him to travel to London. The Branch greatly appreciates the generosity of the sponsor of this service. Although events on the 13th (!) June were a disappointment, it is understood that this may not be the end of such a service. ✕

- ✓✕ The decision of the Secretary of the Department of the Environment to consent to closure of Stonehouse (Burdett Road) station comes as no surprise. The usual recipe of running down the service and then complaining of poor patronage is evident. However, the local authorities are attempting to delay closure pending Government decision regarding the rail policy review. The Branch has offered to assist the authorities and has made suggestions as to how closure - fixed for 1st October - can be postponed. ✕

Wessex

The activities of this Branch have been largely amalgamated with those of Transport 2,000, an organisation with similar aims. The representative of Transport 2,000 for Hampshire, Dorset and south Wiltshire, is Mr. J. C. Honeysett, secretary of the Branch.

- ✓✕ On 17th July, it was reported that the Covent Garden Market Authority has received the backing of the Government in purchasing the land to the north side of the main line at the new Covent Garden site for the possible provision of a railhead. This is important, because it strengthens the hand of the RIS in asking for long-wheelbase block trains to run from Southampton Docks for the transport of perishables. ✕

- ✓✕ The Finance Committee of Hampshire County Council has refused the request for financial aid made by the Mid-Hants Railway Company, but moves are still going ahead for the transport of motive power to Alresford. Transport 2,000 still believes that the Alton to Winchester line is an essential rail link in Hampshire. It is to be hoped that the 1972 Local Government Act will change the attitude of the County Council towards rail transport in rural areas. ✕

Estimates are being prepared for the Hampshire County Subject Panel of Public Passenger Transport for schemes of work to railway structures that will qualify for grant aid. One item to be discussed is the acquisition of the Fareham to Gosport line for passenger rail traffic.

The withdrawal of peak-hour stopping DEMUs from Portsmouth to Southampton and the use of DEMUs on the two-hourly services from Portsmouth to Bristol have brought heavy criticism from the public. Until the Uckfield/East Grinstead to Croydon and Tonbridge to Hastings lines are electrified, the Southern Region is likely to remain extremely short of DEMUs. The Western Region is short of locomotives, so no help is likely from that direction. When south Hants units have failed, there have been cancellations of services. Worst affected have been the Eastleigh to Fareham line (singled east of Botley), used by an hourly shuttle DEMU and a fair large number of freight trains.

The HCC tarmac depot is in operation at Botley and receives several trains a week from Merehead Quarry in Somerset, via Westbury, Salisbury, Romsey, Chandlersford and Eastleigh.

AREASNorth-Eastern England

Our correspondent in the North-East reports :-

- ✓ X There have been hopes that Northumberland County Council will take over the closure-threatened Haltwhistle-Alston line. The matter has been deferred until after a conference of all interested parties has been held this month (September). The County Council chairman, Viscount Ridley, has made it clear that he wants the line to become the "Bluebell" steam line of the North. He hopes that the Council will buy the line from British Rail for £124,000 and lease it to the South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society. At the same time, he would like to see a country park in the vicinity of Lambley Viaduct. He considers that this would draw tourists like a magnet. (See also p.15.) X
- ✓ X Following the consent of the Secretary of State for the Environment, the Riverside branch of the North Tyneside service was withdrawn from 23rd July. X

British Rail is making efforts to encourage greater use of the Middlesbrough-Whitby line. A survey carried out by Teesside County Borough Council showed that 50% of the passengers on one of the trains came from Tyneside and Wearside, so, as an experiment, British Rail has been providing a through train from Newcastle to Whitby on Saturday and Sunday mornings. This service provides a link with the privately-run North Yorkshire Moors Railway from Gosmont to Pickering.

As reported in the last progress report, the 17.08 train from Newcastle to Alnmouth has ceased to operate beyond Morpeth. It has been revealed that the reason is because the line is required for a London-Edinburgh express. At one time, the local train could have been diverted on to the Chevington loop to allow the express to pass, but, unfortunately, this loop is now reduced to freight standard. Hardship is being caused to about 50 passengers. It has been suggested that this could be alleviated to some extent by allowing the express to stop at Alnmouth.

Some brief items - Any hope that the Durham-Bishop Auckland line could be re-opened at a future date has been dashed with the demolition of the Deerness Viaduct. - British Rail's prototype high-speed train has reached 131 m. p. h. on test runs between Darlington and York. - In 1975, celebrations will be held to mark the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton-Darlington railway. The organisers hope that British Rail will allow steam engines to be used on special trains. - There have been protests about the re-timing of commuter trains in the evening between Newcastle and Chester-le-Street. Councillors have met British Rail chiefs to discuss this problem.

North-Western England

- ✓ X Excavation of the Liverpool inner rail loop is expected to be completed sometime this month (September).

Briefly mentioned in the last progress report was the proposed Edge Hill spur. This, an electrified line, would run in tunnel from Liverpool Central station to Edge Hill and would have

intermediate stations at the University, Wavertree and Pighue Lane (near Edge Hill). It would link the city centre with two proposed loops, one in the north-east suburbs and one in the south-east suburbs, and an electrified line to St. Helens. Powers to build the line are being sought in a bill to be promoted in Parliament in November. ✕

The Merseyside Group of the Friends of the Earth have produced "The S.C.H.M.A.L.T.S. report". This has been published "as a response to existing transport proposals on Merseyside and as a part of (the Group's) contribution to the Merseyside Structure Plan." Copies of the report are obtainable from 3 Devonshire Road, Liverpool, 8, price 25p. each (plus postage).

On the main west coast line, electrified services were extended to Warrington, Wigan and Preston from 23rd July. Electrification along the complete route to Glasgow is expected to be completed by next May.

Wigan North-Western station, which has been rebuilt at a cost of £250,000 was officially re-opened by the town's mayor on 4th July.

Oxford

✓✕ The Area Representative has recently had an interview with British Rail's local area manager. One of the subjects discussed was the possible re-opening to passenger traffic of the Oxford-Bicester line, from which services were withdrawn in 1968. Attempts to reduce this double line to single track are being resisted by the General Purposes Committee of Oxfordshire County Council. The Committee is worried that singling could prevent a restoration of the passenger service, as the route is presently used by about thirty freight trains daily. British Rail, which wants to effect singling in October in conjunction with the Oxford area signalling modernisation scheme, maintains that the passenger service could still be re-introduced, that singling would reduce maintenance costs, and that any re-opening of the service would have to be grant aided, as it could not be hoped to run it commercially. ✕

North and Central Wales

Following the recent re-opening of Llanfair P. G. station, Anglesey County Council is approaching British Rail to ascertain whether it would be possible for other stations in the county to be re-opened. Organiser of a campaign to re-open Conway station as an unstaffed halt is Mr. L. Colin Williams, of 2 Croxteth, Grosvenor Road, Colwyn Bay, Denbighshire.

On the Conway Valley line, five small stations - Glan Conway, Dolgarrog, Pont-y-pant, Dolwyddelen and Roman Bridge - have been request stops from 7th May. A Sunday service, locally advertised, again operated along the line this summer, from 1st July to 2nd September.

New this year is a North Wales circular ticket on Mondays to Fridays from 28th May to 28th September at £2 (children £1). Route: the North Wales main coastal line - Shrewsbury - Machynlleth - Penrhyndeudraeth - bus to Blaenau Ffestiniog - then train back to starting point.

North of Scotland

Connel Ferry, on the Crianlarich to Oban line, was converted to an unstaffed halt from 13th August.

HULL-SCARBOROUGH LINE

We are pleased to publish the following special report on the Hull-Scarborough line. This is based upon information received from one of our members, Mr. R. H. Foster, of 201 Lambwath Road, Hull, HU8 0HN.

The introduction of this summer's timetables was quickly followed by many complaints from commuters on train times, connections and extreme temperatures in coaches. A statement on the position was made by East Riding Labour Transport Committee, which "claims that heating is often not turned on in winter and that there is poor ventilation on hot summer days" and "that Bridlington passengers have been badly treated in the past by having to wait on cold stations for trains." (Bridlington station was used by 2 million people last year)

In replying to complaints, British Rail emphasised that the service of trains had been improved, but this had been done in such a way that no increase in the number of diesel units used had been necessary. However, early morning commuters have complained of overcrowding on diesel units to Hull.

Grant aid to the line for this year is £766,000. Among economies introduced recently have been single track operation along part of the line and the replacement of certain level crossing gates by barriers (not automatic.)

For a long time the line has relied mainly on holiday traffic for its income. In 1969, when closure seemed imminent, objections were raised by both regular passengers and the general public. Even when trains are running every 25 minutes to the resorts and are crowded, situations like the following still arise: "As well as the 18-mile jams north of Bridlington, the 10-mile Driffield-Carnaby road was filled with nose-to-tail vehicles". What would happen if the line was closed?

OTHER NEWS

As a result of the Government's decision to cancel research into the air-cushioned train ("the tracked hovercraft"), the Wolfson Foundation has made grants totalling nearly £305,000 to the universities of Warwick, Sussex and Cardiff for research into alternative methods of high-speed train travel.

✓ X British Rail has published its case for a rail link, costing £120 million, between White City (London) and Cheriton (near Folkestone) to be built if the Government decides to support the construction of the Channel Tunnel. X

Hopes are rising that the Government will approve electrification of the King's Cross-Newcastle line at a cost of £10 million.

It is planned to build a station to serve the National Exhibition Centre at Bickenhill, between Birmingham and Hampton-in-Arden, at a cost of £2½ million.

✓ X In the West Midlands passenger transport area, local services between Smethwick and Wolverhampton (via Tipton) and Tyseley and Wilmcote (via Shirley) have ceased after about 7 p.m. in

an effort to reduce losses.

The West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority has approved plans for a £160,000 transit interchange at Stourbridge Junction (Worcestershire).

Planning permission has been granted for a redevelopment scheme at Snow Hill station, Birmingham (closed to passenger traffic from 5th March last year.) The scheme includes a four-platform rail station to be served by trains running through the tunnel, so as to ease congestion at New Street station. X

Train announcements at Craven Arms station (Shropshire) have been made from the signal box from 19th May. Similar arrangements have, or will be made, at Ludlow station, also in Shropshire, and Leominster station (Herefordshire). All these stations are unmanned halts.

Following the 4½ ins. of rain which fell in Sheffield on 15th July (St. Swithin's Day), the Midland station was closed, as the tracks were under water. Victoria station, which had been boarded up, had to be hastily brought back into use!

Five local authorities have asked British Rail to re-open Dronfield station (Derbyshire), on the Chesterfield-Sheffield line. British Rail has replied that this would require an annual subsidy of £40,000.

Ilkley station is to be moved a few hundred yards to the east so as to release land for a bypass road and to provide space for a bus/rail interchange. Ilkley Railway Supporters' Association are opposing the move, as it will place the station further from the town centre.

British Rail has carried out a survey of the Keighley-Skipton line with a view to re-opening intermediate stations. This has resulted from pressure by local authorities.

From 18th June, Kendal and Burneside stations, on the Oxenholme to Windermere line, have been unstaffed halts.

Cardiff Queen Street station, the busiest commuter station in the city, is to be rebuilt at a cost of about £175,000, some of which will be met by the Government.

St. Clears (Carmarthenshire) station, which was closed in 1964, is to be re-opened at an estimated cost of £5,400. This amount will be met by the Department of the Environment aided by five local authorities. Financial help is also to come from local organisations.

Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Executive commenced operations from 1st June. As from the same date, the four-foot gauge underground electric railway was transferred from the control of the Corporation to that of the PTE.

In Edinburgh, a station is proposed between Waverley and Haymarket to serve the projected conference centre at the west end of Princes Street.

The Isle of Man Railway Company is celebrating its centenary this year. On 1st July, a special train ran from Port Erin to Douglas (the only one of the Company's lines now open) to mark the opening of the Douglas-Peel line a hundred years previously. The whole of the Company's property (except for the Port Erin line) is to be compulsorily purchased by the Manx Government. Some of the stations and land may be used for industrial purposes.

WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING

Flint and Deeside Railway Preservation Society (see progress report no. 94, March 1973, p. 12.)
Further details from B. Chapple, 38 Hallfield Close, Flint.

Minirail Ltd. has applied to the Secretary of State for the Environment for a light railway (transfer and amendment) order to be applied to the Axminster and Lyme Regis Light Railway Order, 1899, so as to enable the line to be transferred from British Rail to the company and the latter authorised to construct on the trackbed a 15-inch gauge line from Axminster station to a point just short of the old Lyme Regis station.

North Wales Railway Circle and the Severn Valley Railway Association (Chester Branch) have organised a special train from Bangor to Torquay and Paignton for steam haulage over the Torbay Steam Railway to Kingswear on Saturday, 6th October, returning the same day. The train will pick up at all stations to Chester, call at Crewe and then run via Hereford and Bristol. Full details from N. W. R. C. (TB. Ex.), 2 Croxteth Grosvenor Road, Colwyn Bay, Denbighshire.

Railway Development Association. We heartily congratulate the members of the RDA upon the 21st anniversary this year of their society's foundation. The RDA has similar aims to our own and we have always enjoyed most cordial relations with its members.

According to the summer, 1973, development report of the Association's Midland Area, the RDA, in conjunction with seven local authorities, is working on a scheme for a "mini-inter-city" service between Oxford and Bedford Midland station. Included in the scheme is the construction of platforms on the Bletchley flyover, so as to facilitate through running. Draft timetables enable "the proposed service to be neatly dovetailed in with the existing stopping service from Paddington to Oxford."

The local authorities have offered to subsidise the service, but have run into difficulties over their calculations, as British Rail have insisted that payments should be based on the discredited Cooper Brothers accountancy formula.

Severn Valley Railway Co. has been running a scheduled train service between Bridgnorth and Hampton Loade (4½ miles) since 1970. The company's aim is to extend another 12 miles south to Kidderminster Junction, where there is a connection with British Rail. It now owns the line as far south as Foley Park. However, the remaining one-mile section is still used by freight trains and is, therefore, not yet for sale. Further details from the Membership Secretary, Mr. L. J. Harvey, Bridgnorth station, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, WC16 5DT.

South Tynedale Railway Preservation Society plans to run a passenger service along the Haltwhistle-Alston line after British Rail ceases operations in May, 1975. As the Northumberland County Council may purchase the line, the Society is concentrating on buying locomotives and rolling stock. Headquarters: 14 Westgate, Haltwhistle, Northumberland. (See also p. 11.)

Transport 2,000 (see progress report no. 94, March 1973, p. 12) Headquarters: 9, Catherine Place, London, SW1E 6DX.

Welsh Railways Action Committee has been formed to co-ordinate action on Welsh railways. Secretary: John Rogers, Mor Awel, Stryd Fawr, Tywyn, Merioneth. (See last progress report, p. 15.)

Welshpool and Llanfair Light Railway Preservation Co. Ltd. is negotiating with British Rail for the purchase of the freehold of the line, which British Rail has agreed in principle to sell to the Company for £8,000. The Welsh Tourist and local authorities have been asked for financial assistance. The Company plans to extend services from Sylvaen to Welshpool in 1975-6. Further details from: Llanfair Caereinion, Welshpool, Montgomeryshire.

Wight Locomotive Society runs steam trains every Sunday and bank holiday afternoon during the summer months from Haven Street to Wootton. The latter station lies at present under a minor landslide, but it is hoped to reopen it this autumn and to provide a run-round loop.

We understand from Mr. R. E. Burroughs, (of Spring Vale, The Grove, Ventnor, Isle of Wight) the W. L. S. secretary, who is a member of the Railway Invigoration Society, that "02 engine 'Calbourne' is undergoing a major overhaul and most of the passenger trains are being hauled by "Invincible", an 0-4-0 saddle tank built in 1915 for the Woolwich Arsenal. However, the most important event during the past year was the return to the Isle of Wight of the famous 'Terrier' no. 40, 'Brighton', which caused a sensation at the Paris Exhibition of 1878 by winning a gold medal. This locomotive is now undergoing inspection and preliminary reports indicate that, after being fitted with new boiler tubes, there is a very good chance that she will once again be seen running on the Island lines - not bad for a 95 year old loco! "

We are very pleased to give an example of practical railway invigoration in which one of our members is participating.

Wirral Railway Circle is running special trips from Crewe to Oban (September 7th to 9th), Kyle of Lochalsh (September 21st to 23rd) and the Cambrian Coast line (December 8th). Details from: 161 Spital Road, Bromborough, Wirral, Chester, L62 2AE (please send SAE for each tour of interest).

Workers' Educational Association one-day conference on "Railway restoration", Saturday 13th October, 2.30 pm. in the Schools Room at Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery. Speaker: Mr. O. H. Prosser. Fuller details and tickets (10p) from: Mr. A. D. Russell, 60 Linden Road, Westbury Park, Bristol.

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Editor: Mr. L. G. Hipperson, 24a Cable Road, Hoylake, Wirral, Cheshire,
L47 2BD (telephone: 051 632 4374)

Sub-Editor Mr. H. R. Purser, 30 Staines Road, Feltham, Middlesex, TW14 0DH.
Mr. Purser is responsible for branch and area reports, Mr. Hipperson for all other matter. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in December), material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 27th October.

PUBLISHED BY THE RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

Chairman: Dr. M. P. L. Caton, 10 Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex.
General Secretary: Mr. J. M. Stanley, M. A., 12 Westcombe Park Road, London SE3 7RB.
Membership Secretary: Mr. D. J. Bradbury, 59 Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield.

BBC HORIZON PROGRAMME

Following an approach from the British Broadcasting Corporation, the Society gave some assistance with the preparation of material for the BBC TV Horizon programme on 14th June. This discussed the future of railways in Britain. It considered many of the relevant factors and attempted to weigh up the case for railways against the possibility of developing alternative transport modes.

Mr. Richard Marsh appeared on the programme and argued well in favour of the railways. It was unfortunate, however, that a great deal of prominence was also given to Mr. Richard Casement, of The Economist, the journal which for some time has been running a vicious anti-railway campaign advocating the conversion of much of the system into bus lanes. This idea was put across in the programme without giving any time to a discussion of its merits with any one of the numerous transport experts who do not hold Mr. Casement's extreme and minority view.

We have written to the producer of the programme expressing our concern at this deficiency and asking if the Society may have an opportunity to put across our views at some future date.

BRITISH RAILWAYS BOARD'S RAIL POLICY REVIEW

The Society's Chairman, Dr. Caton, was interviewed on Radio London on 18th June, immediately after Mr. Marsh's statement outlining the BRB's policy review. It was indeed a pleasure to be able to congratulate British Rail on this progressive plan.

✓ X The Society telephoned the following statement to the Press Association: "The Railway Invigoration Society congratulates Mr. Richard Marsh on his realistic and forward-looking plan for the future of the railways. The Society calls on the Government to implement the Railway Board's proposals for an increase in investment in the railways, as a matter of urgency, and to end speculation that the Government favours an implementation of further rail closures, a policy which the Railways Board has shown to be economically unsound."

"The Society also asks that consideration should be given to restoring key routes which have already been closed, in order to give more communities direct access to the inter-city network, and to determining what steps can be taken to transfer a substantial proportion of heavy freight from road to rail in order to reduce road accidents and damage to the environment." X

"RAILWAYS IN THE SEVENTIES"

A second reprint of our latest publication is now available. We have sent copies to selected members of Parliament with covering letters expressing the need to effect a substantial development of the railways.

Any member who has not yet purchased a copy should write for one immediately to Mrs. Barfield, 35 Collinsdale, Camden Walk, London, N. 1. Single copies cost 40p. and are now post free. Alternatively, copies may be obtained through your usual bookseller. To members only, we are pleased to make a special offer of three copies for the price of two, i.e. 80p. post free. Copies purchased in this way must be ordered direct from Mrs. Barfield.

Members are asked to publicise this book in all possible ways. Local authority corporate members are requested to ensure that copies of the book are on the shelves of their public libraries.

ORGANISATION OF THE SOCIETY

Executive Committee

The National Committee at its meeting on 17th May agreed that the Executive Committee should include the three principal officers - the Chairman, Dr. M. P. L. Caton; the General Secretary, Mr. J. M. Stanley, M. A. ; and the Treasurer, Mr. D. Maudlin - and two re-elected members, Messrs. R. V. Banks and J. W. Barfield.

Appointment of officers

As required by paragraph 21 of the Constitution, the National Committee has elected from amongst its members the following officers:-

Vice-Chairman:	Mr. R. V. Banks, 121, Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent.
Assistant Secretaries:	Mr. J. W. Barfield, 70 Alnwick Road, London, E16 3HN Mr. P. G. Scott, 9 Morley Crescent East, Stanmore, Middlesex, HA7 2LG.
Membership Secretary:	Mr. D. J. Bradbury, 59 Dore Road, Dore, Sheffield.
Press & Publicity Officer:	Mr. R. V. Banks (address as above)
Progress Report Editor:	Mr. L. G. Hipperson) (addresses at end
Progress Report) of main progress
Sub-Editor:	Mr. H. R. Purser) report)
Distribution Officer:	Mr. H. G. M. Rogers, 64 Cowper Road, London, W7 1EJ.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 1974

Preliminary notice is given that the 1974 AGM of the Railway Invigoration Society will be held in the area of the Three Counties Branch on a Saturday during April. We hope to give fuller information in our next issue.

CORRECTION : The meeting of representatives from the English conurbations on 18th March was held in Manchester, not as stated in our last issue.

PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY for the exclusive information of its members.