

RDS

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

(incorporating RIS & RDA)

BM - RDS

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please reply to:

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RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Number THREE

APRIL 1979

IS THE JUGGERNAUT FINALLY BEING TAMED?

For some inexplicable reason the Spring seems to be a time when roads and lorries are in the news and this year is no exception. Last year it was the Leitch Report, now we have the saga of the Tachograph; first major measures under the Dykes Act, not to mention the Peeler Affair - of which more anon.

Firstly Transport Secretary, William Rodgers, has now finally stated, following the decision of the European Court, that the Govt. is to make compulsory the installation and use of Tachographs in all British lorries in accordance with E.E.C. Regulation 1463/70. Response from the road transport industry, and the T.&G.W.U. in particular, has been predictable with Alan Law, its Midlands Baron, threatening industrial action which would make the Lorry Drivers' strike pale into insignificance. Nevertheless as Regulations of the E.E.C. Commission are "directly applicable" i.e. binding upon the member states without further enactment, under Sec 2(1) of the European Communities Act 1972 Mr Rodgers had little alternative but to decide as he did and statements by the Unions that they will not accept the "Tachograph" until the U.K. Government make it law are an anathema.

What then is this instrument which is causing all the fuss? It is in fact a combined speedometer and mileage recorder which automatically charts on a circular disc driving times, rest periods, distances covered etc., and anything which takes away the tedious chores of filling in log sheets from drivers would presumably have been welcomed unless the driver has something to hide. In many cases it could be to his advantage, particularly in fatal accidents, where it might be evidence in defence, like the black box in an aeroplane. Already lorries going to the Continent have to be equipped with one and the device, which costs about £350, is fitted to many new vehicles by the manufacturers. In view of the emotive response from lorry drivers one can only reluctantly reach the inescapable conclusion about their use. Unfortunately for Mr Law his members' action was too many strikes ago for us to remember and if the fuel situation takes a turn for the worse, as it may well by the Autumn, the problem will become largely academic. In any event it is likely that the Government will try and avoid a constitutional crisis as long as possible for if there has been a General Election it may no longer be their problem.

In an earlier editorial (RIS P.R. No. 113, Dec. 1977) we outlined the likely effect of these measures on the competitive position of B.R. in the freight field so it will be useful to turn now to another major development which could have implications for the road transport industry. Hitherto Juggernauts have been able to trundle about wherever they liked with little or no effective restraint. Developments at Windsor could, however, be the first turn of the screw. Five years ago Hugh Dykes, M.P. introduced into Parliament what was to become the

Heavy Commercial Vehicles (Controls & Regulations) Act which required Local Authorities to survey lorry movements, identify areas where heavy lorries were considered to be causing environmental damage and gave them for the first time the power to deny access to "Juggernauts" on environmental grounds.

Very few schemes have so far been introduced, or been effective, but the Windsor Cordon seems to be the exception, so much so that the Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association and National Farmers Union went so far as to challenge its validity in the High Court. Shortly before Christmas, however, Mr Justice Niel gave a reserved judgement upholding its validity and awarded costs of £10,000 against the objectors. Initially a temporary measure, Berkshire County Council, its sponsors, have now to decide whether to make it permanent. What in effect the scheme has done is to impose a 5 ton unladen weight limit (except for access) on 11, 50 yd. stretches of road, and one of 25 yds., at all junctions in a semicircle stretching from the M4, near Datchet to the M4 at Paley Street, 10 miles to the west. Because of the way it has been designed about 40 sq. miles around Windsor have effectively become a "no-go" area for heavy traffic and at least one London & Home Counties Branch Member tells me he can now sleep at night. The road hauliers, not unnaturally, are worried that other authorities may follow suit and it is known that Cumbria County Council is contemplating a similar ban on the A591 between Keswick and Kendal. West Yorkshire C.C., who has already placed an experimental ban on the A58 between Leeds and Wetherby, are now considering making it permanent and also introducing a night time ban to HGVs. of all bridges over the River Aire in its area, i.e. in and around Leeds.

Finally we come to one of the more controversial issues to emerge from the Department of Transport in recent months and which has been extensively reported in "Transport Retort" * even to the extent of reproducing the text of a letter and Memorandum - about a proposed Inquiry into heavier lorries - between two senior officials of the Dept. To set the scene members will recall that William Rodgers has consistently opposed E.E.C. pressure to increase the permitted size and weight of lorries in this country and the essence of the proposed Inquiry, according to the D.Tp. officials, was to "get round the political obstacles to change" and by so doing undermine the wishes of their political master. Another hoped for spin off from the Inquiry was to "Improve the sadly tarnished image of the road transport industry". As the machinations have been fully reported elsewhere * we will not dwell on them here but with publication of the Report of the Foster Committee (which calls for tougher measures to control and licence lorries) it has been reported that the Department is considering curbing the power of the Freight Directorate and the "Memorandum" which has now been distributed across Europe has been interpreted by some M.Ps and environmentalists as an attempt to "rig" the democratic process.

Robin Cook M.P. (Edinburgh, Central) has even gone so far as to question the impartiality of the 50% grants given by the Directorate to build private sidings to encourage industry and local authorities to move freight by rail, rather than road, and the allocation of these grants may now be transferred to the Department's Railway Division. The Foster Report itself includes some 80 recommendations to tighten up licensing, safety requirements, and planning regulations designed to outlaw "Cowboy" lorry operators. His major recommendations include the provision of new weighbridges on motorways to intensify checks on overloaded lorries. Whilst the freight directorate - which controls the 250 safety inspectors - has with other departments recommended a reduction in their role, Foster recommends that the numbers should be increased in line with the growing number of heavy lorries on the roads.

All the above developments indicate an increasing will and determination by both central and local government to tame the "Juggernaut"

* "Transport 2000, 40, James Street, London W1M 5HS" (Vol. 2, No.11, Nov. 78; No.12, Dec.78)

but the problem will not be solved merely by building new private railway sidings unless steps are also taken to ensure that when built the facilities are used and that the T.&G.W.U. will not, with officials of the Department of Transport, try to manipulate Government policy behind the scenes to their own ends.

RDS PRESSES FOR IMMEDIATE DMU REPLACEMENT PLAN

Having submitted its observations to the Department of Transport on the B.R. Electrification Plan, at the end of last year, the Society has now written to William Rodgers, expressing its concern at the failure to provide new equipment for many of the secondary lines in Great Britain. In his letter the Society's Chairman, Mr Banks, gave full support to the views of the Central Transport Consultative Committee (fully reported in our last issue) and pressed the Minister to give the matter his urgent attention. He also questioned whether the replacements need necessarily be similar to the existing DMUs as some secondary lines would be ideal for the Bournemouth/Weymouth type of operation so that through coaches could be provided on some trains to avoid passengers having to change.

Whilst this would mean loco-hauled stock he stressed that locos could be used on other duties where appropriate whilst freight wagons could be attached to local trains for connecting to main line freight trains. With the advent of "TOPS" B.R. was in a better position to develop single wagon-load traffic and private sidings under the 1974 Act (Sec.8) grants could thereby be encouraged. There was also a role for the new type railbus being developed at Derby.

With the prospect of a General Election in the Spring or Autumn the Society has been in touch with the Transport Committees of the political parties to bring the issue to the fore during the election campaign and it is also proposed to press the matter at local level particularly in marginal constituencies where rural lines may be under threat. B.R.'s response has been to press for further electrification which would enable newer rolling stock to be cascaded on to the other routes but the Board admit this would not be enough in view of the timescale involved.

Whilst it has plans on the drawing board for a new DMU as a 4 car unit would cost at least £500,000 it is still arguing for the replacement of some uneconomic lines with buses run as part of the rail timetable but has still made no definite statement on the future of the Leyland Railbus. 20 years after Beeching it therefore looks as if the early 1980s will herald a new round of rail closures unless action is taken now.

(This item featured prominently in a recent issue of the Yorkshire Post under the title of "Yorkshire Rail Lines head for the scrap heap")

In addition to the above the Society's newly formed Strategy Subcommittee has put to the main political parties the following 5 point plan with a view to holding further detailed discussions: -

- (1) Future levels of investment in railways.
- (2) Transfer of freight from road to rail.
- (3) The concept of a network of secondary lines and services maintained partly with local authority support.
- (4) Railway electrification in the context of energy conservation.
- (5) Development of a Channel Tunnel.

A report of progress on these five topics will be included in the next issue of Railway Development News.

M.P. CRITICIZES PIECEMEAL APPROACH TO CHANNEL TUNNEL

After the initial blaze of publicity hard planning work now appears to be under way at B.R. on the latest plan for a fixed link with Europe which is being undertaken in conjunction with French and Dutch railways. The Government, in an election year, appears reluctant to commit itself and the attitude of the E.E.C. is to say the least equivocal. On the one hand there have been hints from the Commission (per Richard Burke) that finance might be forthcoming but the European Parliament has reportedly refused to allocate funds for further study.

The tunnel now proposed by B.R. would take the same route as that proposed in 1975, to obviate the need for more expensive ground survey work, but would be single track only and no provision is made in the plan for road vehicles. Initial estimates are that it could be ready by 1990, would have a capacity of 120 trains a day, allowing for periods of maintenance and would cost about £650m. (£550m. for the tunnel and associated works and £100m. for the rolling stock). The trains would be run in batches of up to 10 at a time in each direction (both passenger and freight) and the rolling stock, at present being planned by B.R. at Derby would be dual voltage (750 dc/25KV ac) be of APT design or have a locomotive at each end to allow for the single line tunnel. Little on land infrastructure would be required other than perhaps holding facilities for freight trains at one or other of the portals and of course the necessary connections with Southern Region and SNCF.

Financing, estimated at about £50m. p.a. for both U.K. and France would have to be spread over the 7 year construction period and would represent approximately 5% of the total national investment in transport infrastructure. As B.R. argue that the tunnel should pay its way - and probably justify construction of a second tunnel - this is not considered to be a major problem. The main aim is to get the scheme accepted in principle. Only then will it be possible to go into such details as loading gauge, siting of London terminal etc., In the meantime the Society is still awaiting a reply from the E.E.C. on the RDA (CTRL) proposals, reported in our first issue.

The present piecemeal approach has, however, prompted Hugh Dykes M.P. to table a question in the House of Commons (12/3/79) asking the Secretary of State for Transport why the E.E.C. feasibility study is not being co-ordinated with the BR/SNCF project and it is hoped to report his reply in this or a later issue of "IN PARLIAMENT".

TRANSPORT INDUSTRIES OF THE WORLD - "IVA 79" - HAMBURG

This International Transport Exposition, due to be held in Hamburg from 8th June to 1st July will include such attractions as an exhibition of rail-borne vehicles, an autodrome and a magnetic suspension railway, and function as a kind of clearing house for the exchange of orders, know-how and information in the world's transport industry. Sixteen nations are participating in official joint national exhibitions which will present the results of research and development projects in the field of transport technology. Representatives from 14 other nations will complete the range of industrial exhibits illustrating developments in transport by road, rail, sea and air. "IVA 79" will occupy the entire Hamburg Exhibition Grounds (13, halls and open air display area) as well as a temporary hall with a floor area of 7,500 m² and a large open-air site on the adjoining "Heilingengeistfeld".

Rail transport and technology will be two areas of special interest at "IVA 79". A total of 2,000 metres of track will be laid out in the open-air exhibition area at "Heilingengeistfeld" so that visitors to the Exposition will be able to view actual railborne vehicles of both domestic and foreign manufacture, including locomotives, rolling-stock and mobile track laying equipment. International manufacturers and suppliers of equipment to the rail transport industry will be displaying their products in association with exhibits by the German Federal Railways as well as several other national railway systems from various

countries. "The railways have a future" will be their motto, and this promises to be the largest display of rail-borne vehicles ever seen at an exhibition.

Only at intervals of 10-14 years is it possible to present a survey of the significant changes and improvements in the methods and technologies of international transport. This is the aim of the transport exhibitions which have been held in Germany since 1925, at first on a national basis and then internationally since 1965. Comparable events demonstrating the technological developments in transport have not hitherto been held in other countries.

The scientific and technical importance of "IVA 79" lies in the fact that the industrial countries, especially West Germany, France, Italy, Great Britain, Canada, the U.S.A. and Japan; and also the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland, will offer their know-how in all sectors of transport technology to the countries of the Third World on a partnership basis for the solution of transport problems. An inter-continental forum with Africa Days, Asia Days and Latin America Days will be devoted exclusively to the consideration of transport development plans and transport needs in these parts of the world.

West German industry together with the Federal Ministry of Research and Technology will present a survey of the various technologies relating to local public transport, railways, road vehicles and road traffic, freight transport and transport chains, and also practicable developments in aerospace research. The Ministry is also organising an international symposium on transport technologies which will bring together scientists and technicians from all over the world for an exchange of experience and ideas.

In rail transport, the exhibition will not only present all new systems developed up to the testing stage, but also innovative work on Europe's railways - especially in West Germany, France, Italy, Belgium and Switzerland. Industry also, including not only the large firms but also the smaller ones, will show what it has to offer. The same applies to integrated and automated systems in local public transport. There will also be a comprehensive presentation of new developments in the field of city bus transport, including demonstrations of electric-powered and so called "Hybrid" buses. The latter are equipped with both an electric motor and a diesel engine, either of which can be used depending on the circumstances.

Telecommunications, sea transport, air transport, aerospace developments will also form part of the exhibition. Scientific and technical research findings will be discussed at many other special conferences; for example, in fields of road and rail transport, materials application, chemical materials; urban, regional and area transport planning, operational requirements at airports etc., As a source of scientific and technical information relating to all aspects of traffic and transport and as a place to compare the merits of different systems, the IVA is unrivalled.

Any member wishing to obtain further information about "IVA" 79 should contact:-

Steve Wilkinson, 52, Manor Park, Histon, Cambridge, CB4 4JT

CENTENARY OF ELECTRIC RAILWAYS - 1979

The Centenary of Electric Railways Committee has recently advised us that many events are to take place to mark the Centenary of Electric Railway Traction which occurs on 31st May. An exhibition showing the development of electric railways and tramways over the past 100 years will visit major cities throughout the United Kingdom. Negotiations for the exhibition to go on show in London, Birmingham, Manchester and Glasgow are well advanced, and it is hoped to arrange further venues.

In the Autumn there will be a series of lectures, commencing with

a special meeting organised by the History of Technology Group of the Institution of Electrical Engineers. This will be followed by meetings arranged by each of the Societies supporting the Committee (Electric Railway Society, Isle of Man Railway Society, Light Railway Transport League and Southern Electric Group). A film show of early electric railway scenes is being arranged, and the Centenary will be featured in the Brighton Museum of Transport's "Grand Transport Extravaganza" in May.

The Centenary Committee expect there to be at least one railtour of special electric interest during the year. There will also be special facilities to enable enthusiasts to visit the Isle of Man, between 26th May and 2nd June, when there will be many special events including a Grand Cavalcade on "Centenary Day" itself. Full details of these will be published in due course but the Committee's main aim is to encourage other organisations to arrange events to mark the Centenary, and to co-ordinate these with its own fixtures.

Any member wishing to obtain further information should write to the Committee Secretary, Mr A.C.Holmewood of 48, Church Lane, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 2DW

T.C.FOLEY, O.B.E.

It is with deep regret that we report the death of Mr T.C.Foley, on 26th January after a short illness. Since its inception, in 1929, he had been Secretary of the Pedestrian's Association for Road Safety, latterly its Chairman and since 1970 a Hon. Consultant.

My first encounter with him was in April 1962, at the beginning of the Beeching Era, when he gave a spirited address at a Public Meeting organised by the PA and the two constituent societies of RDS entitled "Railways Under Threat - A Crisis in Transport". With him, as Chairman of the meeting was Lord Stonham with whom he formed, shortly afterwards the National Council on Inland Transport, the first major plank in the pro-rail lobby of which RIS and RDA were founder members.

From those pioneering days when we appeared to be a small minority battling against apparently hopeless odds much has been achieved, even if it took 10 years to finally halt the Beeching Juggernaut. Had it not been for the spirit of such as he there might now be very little railway system left for us to "develop".

He was still actively campaigning for his main cause "Road Safety" until shortly before his death and I well remember his unassailable argument that "Everyone is a Pedestrian some of the time". His passing is indeed a great loss to the transport world and those who "foot it" will probably never have a stauncher champion. Our sympathies go to his wife, son and daughter and to the Pedestrians Association. ED.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor will consider for publication letters on matters of general interest to members. Any opinions expressed, however, must not be taken as necessarily reflecting the official views and policies of the Society.

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

WITH THIS ISSUE

"IN PARLIAMENT" - "MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT" - "A.G.M. NOTICE"
"ELECTION QUESTIONNAIRE"

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

(This section, which is based principally on information provided by branch secretaries and area representatives, tells what the Railway Development Society is doing throughout the United Kingdom, as well as giving news and views of railway happenings.)

BRANCHESLONDON & HOME COUNTIES

Two new rail services to commence in May - First will be the long delayed opening of the L.T. "Jubilee Line" between Stanmore and Charing Cross which will open on 1st May after an official ceremony by the Prince of Wales the day before. The G.L.C. has since announced an intention to go ahead with the extension to Fenchurch Street - for which it has had powers for some years, but without the stations at Aldwych and Cannon Street (to save money). It is, however, inconceivable that some interim works will not be carried out as to try and build them after the line has opened would greatly add to the cost in the long run. In any event the Council will need to promote a money bill to fund the project which may come up against Government opposition in Parliament.

Mixed feelings over Hackney Extension - The second development, shortly afterwards, is the extension of the Stratford - North Woolwich diesel services to Camden Road and this received a somewhat mixed reception at a crowded meeting held by the Branch and Transport 2000 at St. Mark's Church Hall, Dalston, on 7th March when Mr Philip Satchwell Passenger Services Manager for the South East at the B.R.B. explained the Board's long term proposals. Ultimately it was planned to electrify the new route - which has not seen passenger services for over 30 years run the North London Line trains from Richmond to Custom House and then under the Thames to an interchange with the Southern at Woolwich. This would, by implication, mean losing the line between Dalston Junction and Broad Street and also the last section to North Woolwich.

The Branch Committee has done much heart searching on this issue but concluded that the new service was justified even at the expense of the "City Link" as filling a significant gap in the system and as a means of revitalising Docklands. The public meeting, however, thought otherwise and Stanley Clinton Davis M.P for Hackney Central, the area that would be mainly affected, said "The direct link to the City at Broad Street is fundamental" a view which was echoed by the Tory Candidate. To meet this criticism Mr Satchwell suggested that in its place an "exclusive busway" should link Dalston with a re-developed Liverpool Street but stressed that this was merely an idea and depended upon the Minister's decision on the latter. The proposal was met with derision although there was applause for Dr Frank Tomlins, author of the RDA Channel Tunnel proposals, when he urged that a tramway would be better.

In his illustrated talk Mr Satchwell spoke of the need to serve a possible Third London Airport, and/or a fourth terminal at Heathrow, but Dr Tomlins, pointed out that the Channel Tunnel would make this unnecessary. "Why not take the people all the way, instead of just being a handmaiden to the airways?" He also suggested an escalator link should connect Camden Road (B.R.) with Camden Town (L.T.). In summing up Mr Satchwell stressed the need for financial backing from local authorities for every new venture, saying "I want your reactions" In any event the new stations at Mare Street and Wallis Road (to be known as Hackney Central and Hackney Wick) would not be ready until after May and that at Dalston not until 1980.

Branch representatives, together with those of other interested local organisations have already met B.R., urging that opening of the new stations should be expedited if the new service is to achieve its full potential and talks are continuing.

Further rail links - New road proposals - RDS (L & H.C.) is urging the Greater London Council to co-ordinate its planning policies more closely with those of B.R. Meanwhile the London Amenity and Transport Association (a lively group that is friendly to Railways) * launched a campaign to combat the Council's road programme at a Public Meeting in Central Hall, Westminster on 8th March. One result of co-operation between GLC/BR is the possible re-opening to passengers of the Snow Hill tunnel - between Blackfriars and Farringdon - thus enabling a through service to be provided from Southern Region to the new interchange at West Hampstead (See RDN No.1, p.8). In his talk (above) Mr Satchwell also hinted at the provision of an interchange station at Southwark (where the Blackfriars and Charing X lines cross). The Branch Committee would, however, like to see this service continue to Luton. It is also watching closely a proposal to extend the L.T. Northern Line branch to Mill Hill East to serve a new sports complex at Hendon with a possible connection to the Midland main line.

* The Secretary of LATA is Tony Howell, 133, Graham Street, London N.1.

Home Counties not forgotten - Sussex M.P.s are being lobbied in support of a renewed campaign to re-open and electrify the Uckfield - Lewes line. There is also pressure for new stations on the Umpinster - Grays line in Essex, particularly at Belhus (a large centre of population) and for a third station at Guildford (Surrey) on the line to Farnham. Proposals appeared in "Modern Railways" (Feb. 79, p.80) for rationalisation and electrification of part of the Reading - Redhill - Tonbridge line (between Ash and Wokingham). A link between Croxley Green (B.R.) and Watford (L.T.) has also been proposed together with electrification of the Watford - St. Albans Branch as a long term possibility.

MIDLANDS

Inner City Scheme - Re-opening of the Snow Hill - Handsworth - Smethwick line and integration with a Community Bus Scheme in Handsworth /Hockley area is suggested by RDS in a recent 17 page submission for schemes to improve this Inner-City area. In addition to Snow Hill new stations are proposed at Hall Street (Jewellery Quarter), Lodge Road Hockley and Booth Street, Handsworth. (Copies of the Report 60p. from RDS (Midlands) (Branch Secretary as for Sub-Editor @) (See below)

Quest for stations - RDS has been lobbying for a new station at Friar Park (1 mile south of Bescot) to serve nearby housing estates. Also on the New St. - Coventry electrified line for a new station at Belchers Lane, Alum Rock. Surrounded by housing this would cut journeys to the city from 16 mins. (bus) to 6 mins. (rail) and was fully supported by Councillors and local residents at a public meeting on 8th March.

Wolverhampton Frontage - Completion of the town's new Ring Road will place the railway station outside the new "City Wall" !! and thus detract from the present good access and car parking facilities. Objections have been lodged pressing for a pedestrian surface access together with alternative car parking.

Worcester Parkway - Correspondence through Michael Spicer M.P., has confirmed B.R.'s decision to suspend, reluctantly, planning work on this new station largely as a result of the authorisation of only 18 of the 39 HST sets required for the NE/SW service which were due May 82.

Usage up again !! - Over the period (Nov. 1974 - Nov. 1978) the daily local passenger totals at Birmingham (New Street and Moor Street) stations increased by 93% (from 24,781 - 47,879)

P.T.P. Comments - The Midlands Branch of RDS has submitted a 4 page Observations on each of the draft Public Transport Plans for Salop, Staffs., Warwicks., and Hereford & Worcester. Members in these shire counties may wish to help the Branch to monitor developments.

Birmingham - Worcester Circle - A new "Circle rail service link-

ing up existing local train routes has been proposed to run from New Street, via Stratford-upon-Avon - Evesham - Worcester - Kidderminster - New Street. This link up could prove most useful with its many connection points and members interested should write to West Midland Circle Line Group, 10, Falstaff Court, Guild Street, Stratford-upon-Avon.

New Inter-City Route - From May (1979) B.R. will run a new Inter-City service between Manchester and Brighton via Wolverhampton - B'ham, - Oxford - Gatwick. This will link up new pastures to serve not least a major Airport and a popular holiday resort.

EAST ANGLIAN

A call for more Government investment to replace the ageing DMUs in service in East Anglia was made by the Chairman, Mr P.R. Lawrence, in his address to the Branch A.G.M. held in Ipswich Town Hall on 3rd February. He also stressed the desirability of extending electrification further into East Anglia and for the County Councils to set up Transport Users' Advisory Committees, adding "plans for the future of the railways must be made now with full consultation for passengers. It is no use waiting until the year 2000 (when oil will most likely be nearly exhausted)"

On 30th January, 30 representatives of eight different local campaigns, plus RDS and Transport 2000 members, from all over the region, attended a Re-openings Conference in Norwich, organised by the Branch. Detailed discussion took place on the various lines and station re-opening campaigns and it proved so useful that a second conference has been arranged for 24th March. The Branch also wrote, in January, to all M.Ps with East Anglian constituencies urging them to press for more Government investment to enable B.R. to renew its DMU fleet during the 1980s. Norfolk County Council produced its draft P.T.P. at the end of December, sending it to only a small number of bodies (incl. RDS) for comments; and expressing its reluctance to produce one at all !! As with Suffolk, a mere 3 weeks were allowed for comment, but comment we did and much of our submission was devoted to what the draft Plan did not say.

Excursions - Six special trains, using freight-only lines, have been chartered by RDS and its associated groups. The first is to run on 31st March to Swavesey on the St. Ives line and is proving popular. Others are:- 21st April - Norwich - Fakenham and return (dep. 11.00 back at 19.40) and is believed to be the first passenger train to run between Dereham and Fakenham for 15 years. FARE: £2.00 (return) £3.00 if Thursford Organ Museum is also visited) BOOKINGS: to J.S.Hull, Cydonia Cottage, Station Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk (Make cheques etc., payable to WyDFRAC).

Sunday 22nd July - Norwich - Dereham - Lowestoft - D'ham - Norwich. FARE: £0.50p. (single) Norwich - Dereham or £2.00 (Rtn.) Dereham - Lowestoft. BOOKINGS to J.S.Hull (as above)

Saturday 19th May - March - Wisbech - Cambridge - Wisbech - March. Dep. March, 11.15 (approx). Return fare of 80p. (Single 40p) between March and Wisbech; but the main aim is to enable Wisbech people to have an afternoon in the county town of Cambridge by train.

BOOKINGS: to Lt. Col. J.A.V. Bolam, 5, Union Place, Wisbech, Cambs. PE13 1HB. (Make cheques etc., payable to W.M.R.A.C.)

Suffolk - The Sudbury - Marks Tey Rail Users' Association has made two more modest steps forward: Day returns will now be available from Colchester to Sudbury, as well as in the reverse direction; and tickets to stations on the Sudbury Branch to Colchester main line stn. are now also valid to St. Botolphs (in the centre of Colchester) and served by Clacton line trains) SMTRUA and RDS both hope ultimately that Sudbury trains will start and finish at St. Botolphs.

The RDS exhibition was on show in Bury St. Edmunds Library during February; at Histon during March; and is due at Ipswich Library in May.

B.R. Schemes - In February it was announced that B.R. Research Department at Derby is to start work on a study of the Ipswich - Lowestoft line to secure its more effective and economic use. It is likely to be about 2-3 years before any changes on the line will be seen but these might include simpler or automatic level crossings - the line has over 40 along its 49 miles - and new signalling. ESTA has written to B.R. welcoming the prospect of new investment of this kind. B.R. does however, have plans to build new carriage servicing facilities at Norwich by 1982/3 which could lead to the loss of the four Inter-city trains between London and Yarmouth. These are at present cleaned out of doors there and because of local fears among users about the future level of rail services to Yarmouth the Branch has called a public mtg. for 28th March to discuss the issue.

Spring Meeting - This will be held by the Branch in the Kennedy Room of the Cambridge Union Society on Saturday 2nd June starting at 14.00.

AREAS

North East England

Our correspondent in the North East reports:-

Newcastle trains - The 07.25 Newcastle - London train, referred to in RDN No.2. has been brought forward to 06.38, thus allowing passengers from the North to reach King's Cross by 10.08. Suitable connections are available from Sunderland, South Shields and West Monkseaton. The London service, in general, will be further improved from May when the HST 125 trains operate an all-day service. In an attempt to draw some traffic away from the successful Inter-City services British Airways plan to provide much cheaper flights in the Spring.

August is now given as the likely time for Tyneside's first Metro services to be operating following various delays in construction. Initially these will not be available to Newcastle Central and a bus link will have to be provided between there and Haymarket Metro stn.

County Schemes - Pressure from the City and County Councils has resulted in a better service being scheduled for Durham as from May 79. Unfortunately the reverse situation will apply at Chester-le-Street, where the already limited weekdays only service will be reduced to 4 northbound and five southbound trains each day. Various Councils are seeking an improvement of the existing rail services or restoration of some closed lines. Alnwick D.C. are pressing for more trains for Alnmouth with better bus connections. Northumberland County Council is to publish its P.T.P. shortly and the Tynedale Planning Committee has asked for the re-opening of Greenhead station on the Newcastle - Carlisle line whilst Wansbeck D.C. and Northumberland Trades Council are seeking the restoration of a service between Ashington and Newcastle within the next 5 years.

Merseyside and the North West

Delivery of the new Class 507 EMU sets continues and about 12 are now in service on the Northern Lines (Garston - Kirkby - Ormskirik and Southport). With the May timetable will be the very welcome improvement to the present Inter-City Trans-Pennine DMU services with the introduction of an all-loco hauled hourly shuttle (Liverpool - York) with good connections into the East Coast HSTs and the Hull DMUs at Leeds. Some of the York trains will continue to Newcastle to maintain the extg. Liverpool - Newcastle through service.

The Merseyside draft Transportation Plan was published recently and included amongst its proposals:-

- the possible re-opening of the St. Helens (Shaw St.)- Earlstown line;
- support for further investment in private sidings and a policy for the transfer of freight from road to rail;
- retention of the capital schemes for Rock Ferry/Hooton and Garston/Hough Green electrification;
- construction of the Edge Hill (via Wapping Tunnel) - Central

line; - Lime Street - St. Helens (Shaw St.) electrification; - abandonment of the NE and SE loops from Broad Green to Bootle and Halewood respectively; and the Aintree/Bootle - New Strand link; - encouragement of development in the vicinity of railway stations.

Park & Ride - Lancashire County Council has added another Rail park and ride scheme to their credit at none other than "Leyland" which joins the other facilities now opened at Bamber Bridge, Rose Grove and Carnforth.

Lakelander '79 - B.R. are this year developing yet further their successful Lakeland package tours which now also offer: Windermere Steam Boat Museum; Leighton Hall Eagles; Carnforth Steam Railway Musm. and many others to the existing Lake Steamers and Lakeland Teas.

Lostock Hall Hopes - After being closed for 10 years hopes are now rising for the possible re-opening of Lostock Hall station near Preston. It is now amidst far more housing than it was when closed, has more trains passing and is already used to pick up and set down railway staff. The idea also has strong support from the local Councils and M.Ps.

Clitheroe Dales - STELLA - West Yorkshire P.T.E. and several other authorities have agreed to develop usage and rail services to Clitheroe station as a centre for visiting the Dales and Ribbel Valley. Cumbria and Lancashire are also giving financial support to the venture. Active in this area is the "Support the East Lancashire Line Association" * which has been instrumental in arranging specials from Colne and Clitheroe to York (on 24th March) and Grange-over-Sands (on 27th May). STELLA's Feb. 79 "Bulletin" also reported a return "single fare only" B.R.deal to Accrington, Blackburn, Burnley, Nelson and Preston from all other stations on the line (Preston - Colne) but this offer ended 7/4/79.

* STELLA was one of a number of RDS associated groups featured in a recent article in "Transport Retort" (Jan.79) by Trevor Garrod and Graham Collett on "How to set up Rail Users Groups" (Secretary of STELLA is:- J.Molloy, 132, Hallam Road, Nelson, Lancs.)

Yorkshire

Ice and Snow - Rail to the RESCUE! - A combination of snow, ice and "Industrial Action" by the road gritters kept the Sheffield buses off the roads between 14th-17th February leaving thousands of commuters with the prospect of having to walk to work and back again. B.R. however, stepped in the breach. Wadsley Bridge and Dronfield stations were re-opened, extra trains stopped at the suburban stations and Inter-City trains were stopped at Dronfield and Dore. These were packed to capacity with reports of passengers having to stand in the toilets. The local newspaper "The Star" estimated that an extra 10,000 people travelled by train during this period. "Can Bus Replace Train?" ED

Resulting from these events a meeting took place on 7th March between Derbyshire County Council, N.E.Derbyshire D.C., Chesterfield B.C. and B.R. to consider the possibility of re-opening Dronfield on a permanent basis but this was reckoned to cost £120,000 a year. South Yorkshire P.T.E. is, however, considering the role of rail travel within the area in the light of these experiences.

Woodhead Saga Continues - Due to the severe winter Glossop was also cut off once or twice. R.H.Atkins M.P., Chairman of the Parliamentary Transport Committee, arranged a meeting between the 10 local M.Ps; Sheffield and Manchester railmen in London in March to put the case for the line's retention to Industry Minister, Gerald Kaufman.

Penistone Town Council have been pressing for a further meeting with the local action group whilst a mobile exhibition is being planned for the Spring to tour centres served by the line. Due closure of the Hope Valley line on Sundays for repairs to Totley Tunnel considerable extra traffic has been diverted via "Woodhead" in recent months.

RDS is to hold a Public Meeting in Sheffield on 28th April on the theme "Why Railway Development Society" All local members should by now have been notified.

Derbyshire/Notts.

Our local group in this area has submitted comments on the draft P.T.P.s for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire and amongst their comments were:- Better publicity; bus/rail integration; greater consideration of the role and potential of railways; the need for new stations at Ilkeston, Heanor and Borrowash.

North and East Lincolnshire

An exhibition mounted by RDS in Grimsby Library attracted considerable interest and was augmented by a well attended public meeting on 20th February when it was agreed to set up the South Humberside Rail Users' Group to campaign for the retention, improvement and greater usage of the rail routes from Grimsby and Cleethorpes to Lincoln, Retford, Doncaster and Barton-on-Humber. The new SHRUG Committee will be pressing for a publicity campaign; the possible re-opening of the Grimsby - Louth freight-only line to passengers and the relaying of the former East Lincs. line in conjunction with the Grimsby - Louth Rail Action Group.

Severnside

The only news from this area concerns the privately owned West Somerset Railway - the longest of its kind in the country - and which is now moving steadily out of the red. Chairman, Richard Stevens has, however, complained at the lack of consideration given by Somerset C.C. to the line's contribution in its draft P.T.P. "Take our line seriously" he declared recently, instead of trying to dismiss us as merely a fun railway for tourists.

For the first time this year the line will be open as far as Bishops Lydeard and since recent talks between the Company and N.U.R. officials to settle the long standing dispute over access to Taunton station and its effect on that Union's bus drivers, the present coach link could be replaced by a through rail service by 1980. In summing up Mr Stevens pointed to the Council's £ $\frac{1}{3}$ m. subsidies to local buses saying "We dont want a subsidy just an acknowledgement that we exist."

Devon & Cornwall

A paper arguing the case for re-opening Bideford station has now been submitted to Torrington District Council by Mr R.Joanes of the North Devon Line Development Group. He does, however, question the need for certain lightly used intermediate stations between Exeter and Barnstaple - a view not necessarily shared by RDS.

In view of the need to promote local activities the Area Rep. would be pleased to hear of rail developments from local members.

(Names and addresses of all Branch & Area Reps. appeared in the last Members Only Supplement)

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Mr Bevan is responsible for branch and area reports, Mr Barfield for all other material. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in August) all material must be in the hands of the appropriate Editor by WEDNESDAY 4th JULY.

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