Pailwatch

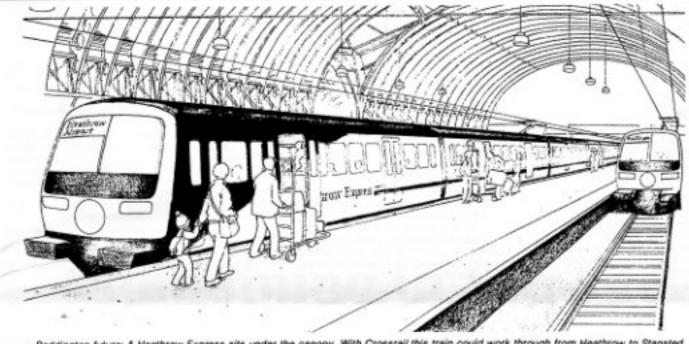
A VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

No 43

MARCH 1990

60p



Paddington future: A Heathrow Express sits under the canopy, With Crossrall, this train could work through from Heathrow to Stansted

le of two Ci

The electrification of the Birmingham Cross-City line was finally given the go-ahead on 7 February by Transport Secretary Cecil Parkinson.

The £36 million scheme will use new 323 multiple units and will involve wiring 32 miles of track plus a link into Tyseley depot. The scheme is jointly funded by British Rail and Centro (the new name for West Midlands Passenger Transport Executive).

Work on the Redditch section will start in May followed by the Aston - Lichfield section in October. The New Street - Aston section is already electrified. The new trains will be running in 1992.

Mr Parkinson chose to make his announcement in an answer to a written parliamentary question in the run-up to a by-election in the Lichfield area. The Mid-Staffordshire by-election took place last week and the Tories were worried they might lose. Labour had accused Mr Parkinson of electoral bribery.

The go-ahead decision came after a 14-month wait by commuters who have become increasingly frustrated by delays and cancellations to services operated by 30-year-old diesels.

The news is particularly welcome to RDS members who have worked long and hard to secure this vital improvement.

By contrast, London is still awaiting a decision on Crossrail which most transport experts, as

well as RDS, have identified as the plan most likely to ease London's travel crisis. (The capital no longer has a democratically elected transport

The proposal for a line from Liverpool Street to Paddington would open up a whole host of new east-west opportunities, in a similar way to how Thameslink has brought Kent, Surrey and Sussex in touch with Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire.

But it seems Mr Parkinson is not yet convinced of the political need for an early statement or the desirability of a full-size deep-level railway which could be used by BR and the Underground. In preference to Cross rail, he has allowed the Jubilee line extension to Docklands to go ahead, partly financed by property companies.

It is outside finance which has filled yet another important gap in the network, the £235 million link from Paddington to Heathrow airport, funded by the BAA. The Bill to authorise it is, however, still bogged down in Parliament.

By 1994 it is hoped it will be providing a 16-minute trip to the airport.

Mr Parkinson has let it be known that he will approve one major rail scheme in the autumn. That means Crossrail has to compete for approval with plans to build a new Chelsea -Hackney Tube line.

However necessary the proposed Tube line is, it cannot achieve the major strategic linkage which possible to have a Bristol - Norwich train service, as well as Plymouth - Cambridge trains, Oxford Colchester and a myriad of new Network SouthEast services. It would even be possible to run trains linking Heathrow and Stansted airports.

What's more it would relieve congestion on some of London's key roads, the A40 and the A4 and

To win support for Crossrail, London and Home Counties branch plans to leaflet travellers at Paddington station during Rail Development

They will be told how Crossrail can be an essential element in freeing London's blocked transport arteries, particularly the creaking, grouning Central Line, and ensuring the capital's economic prosperity.

It is also sad that BR which has been so successful. with the North - South Thameslink service is not being allowed to expand it to meet the pent-up demand. There will be a few extra Thameslink services in May but Mr Parkinson has failed to give his backing to the full-blown Thameslink Metro plan.

St Paul's Thameslink is expected to open in May according to BR "in a bright environment" on one of the few remaining bomb sites in the City of London.

New style ticket to ride

MIKE BRESLIN explains how BR International has woken up to the fact that people in Manchester, Norwich and other regional centres want proper facilities for booking through to Europe. A new simplified ticketing system is to be introduced in May.

It will soon be possible to buy a ticket to the Top Ten destinations in Europe at practically any British station which has APTIS machines. So it should be easier to book to Paris, Brussels, Koln and elsewhere.

For other journeys, an easy-to-use manual called Euro 400 listing the 400 most popular continental destinations, can be used by even the least experienced member of the booking staff.

The manual also contains details of how to arrange bookings for Voyager journeys - by more complex routes and to destinations not listed under Euro 400.

The concept has been designed to reduce customer inquiry times and has been enthusiastically welcomed by the travel trade who may be persuaded to arrange many more bookings for rail journeys. Package holidays by trains may also grow in popularity.

This a great improvement on what BR planned to do in 1988 - to restrict the issue of international tickets to London and the ferry

At that time BR also planned to stop issuing tickets for much of the European network which would have meant that a traveller from Manchester to Cannes would have been able to buy a ticket only to Paris, leaving the customer to make his own arrnagements for the Paris - Cannes leg of the journey.

Many people have also been affected by BR.

drastically cutting the number of Travel Centres able to issue international tickets.

Now BR seems to be getting its act together in preparation for the Channel Tunnel. A programme of staff training at BR booking offices is already in hand. Watch out for full details of the new scheme from BR.

Voting time: A Developing Provincial Network will be the subject of a talk by sector director Sidney Newey at the RDS annual general meeting in Manchester on 5 May. The meeting takes place at Liverpool Road Conference Centre at 1.30 pm. There is a frequent service from Piccadilly (platform 14) to Deansgate station which is five minutes walk from the

Outside the station, cross the road, walk under the railway bridge to the crossroads. Cross the main road and continue into Liverpool Road (left turn). Walk along Liverpool Road to the Air and Space Museum. Turn right into Lower Byrom Street. The conference centre is on the

Members may like to take the opportunity of visiting the nearby Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry (10am-5pm). It offers a view of our own industrial heritage

The museum claims the world's largest collection of working stationary engines. It also has vintage cars, motorbikes and railway locos. The development of the electricity induustry is unfolded and the world's oldest passenger railway station is there too. The Air and Space gallery is supplemented by a display of water supply and camitation.





Let's keep

managers on

the right track

I am sometimes asked about the relationship between our society and BR managers.

V_{IEW}

We are prepared to criticise them when we consider their actions are not in the interests of rail users or rail expansion but we also defend them when they are attacked for things which are not their fault.

When a user complains, we have to consider where and how to apportion blame.

Suppose a train is cancelled because the 30-year-old diesel multiple unit has broken down and there is no spare stock. We know that BR has had constant obstacles put in its way by the Department of Transport when it applies to invest in new trains.

In such a case, we can feel justified in urging frustrated commuters to write to their MP.

On the other hand, the Government is not to blame for the recent withdrawal of the annual season ticket holder's railcard. This inept and insensitive move by certain people in higher management lost them goodwill and probably

We should like to see them admit they were wrong and reinstate the facility. Management in East Anglia had the grace to admit it made an error in withdrawing the one-day ranger ticket four years ago. It has now been reinstated.

We appreciate BR is not fully master in its own house but we do expect it, in regular contacts with politicians, to "blow its own trumpet" by stressing the advantage and potential of rail

A few years ago, three RDS people sat in a county council inquiry and inwardly groaned at the wimpish, defensive, negative comments of one (now retired) BR manager.

I once asked a manager for permission to go along trains collecting signatures on a pro-electrification petition. Her declined, saying that he and his colleagues did not want to get involved in politics.

The road lobby do not seem to have such scruples! Fortunately there are also many managers with whom we have worked constructivley over the years. They have open minds, and a willingness to try out new ideas.

Whatever we may think of certain individuals, they are the only managers we have got. We should try to keep on constructive speaking terms with them, while accepting that we may not agree on everything.



What the papers say

Not only does laying railway tracks cost one third of roads, but the saving of fuel is enormous and, not to be forgotten, the safety of train travel is considerably greater.

Transport Review 9.2.90

Provincial services are at crisis point, says a BR staff report, with train defects forcing postponement of timetable improvements and leaving reliability at an all-time low.

Daily Telegraph 30.1.90

On city streets, almost all the airborne carbon monoxide comes from motor vehicles, as do around half of the nitrogen oxides and hydrocar-

New Scientist 25.11.89

Government vultures that have picked the bones of BR for decades to satisfy the belly of the Treasury are coming home to roost in the seemingly intractable problems that hang over the construction of a viable rail link between London and Folkestone.

Observer 14.1.90

Throughout the 1980s, German, French and Italian railways invested at least three times more than BR.

Daily Express 9.1.90

The people who live and work in London deserve a better transportation system. Extensions to the Underground, while welcome, are no substitute for BR gauge tunnels, which could transform the efficiency of rail services throughout the South

Financial Times 14.11.89

Environmentalists from seven European countries have united to fight for a sustainable transport policy.

Transport Review 26.1.90

Rail services bring benefits which spread well beyond the rail user — reductions in road congestion, lower vehicle emissions, less nuisance and a shift of freight from road to rail, said CBI director-general John Banham. But such "external benefits" of rail investment do not appear on BR's balance sheet, nor are they reflected in the profit and loss account by which the new chairman will be judged.

The Times 4.1.90

Even the road lobby was surprised by the massive £7 billion promised by Mr Parkinson for road building

Public Transport Information 1.90

The number of company cars has quadrupled in the past decade.

Transport Review 26.1.90

SEVEN WASTED YEARS

Public expenditure on transport On road £22,965 million On rail £573 million (1963-1989 inclusive) Source: HMSO

Dear Mr Parkinson,

An open letter to the Secretary of State for Transport

(written by a lifelong Conservative voter)

You must surely be aware that many people are deeply concerned about the Government's decision to phase out BR subsidies, and particularly those to Network SouthEast. I in particular am concerned over various remarks you yourself have made on transport policy

Firstly, regarding commuter trains, you question why the Government should subsidise a service which is already in "excessive demand". The inference therefore is that this "excessive demand" should be curbed by removing subsidies, and that alternative forms of transport, i.e. road, should take on the business driven from the railways by prohibitive fares.

You also suggest that with subsidy, people are being "bribed" into using British Rail. Are you really suggesting that it is preferable to switch to roads, given the already severe congestion in the South East? Do you really believe that it would be better value for money for the nation as a

a) to invest even more in the private and company car and

b) build yet more roads to cope with the extra traffic?

Even if you were, as an alternative, able to tempt large numbers of rail users to commuter coach services on price, how could such services compete on speed, given current levels of congestion? Just where would large numbers of extra coaches be stabled outside the rush hour, and what would be the commercial attraction of operating such a service during the rush hour

Do not you and the Department of Transport recognise that railways have a far greater potential to absorb extra traffic than the roads with improved signalling, extra rolling stock and adding extra lines? (Far cheaper for the nation than grandiose dual carriageway and motorway

You also questioned in the House of Commons recently the wisdom of taxpavers in places like Hull subsidising commuters in the South East. This, frankly, I regard as a very cheap political jibe. Taken to its logical conclusion, I would question why my taxes should go to motorway schemes in the North - roads which I am most unlikely ever to use. And what about the perennial question of subsidised company cars?

I am also aware of your claim that under this Government, record sums of investment are being approved for British Rail. But not PUBLIC money. Why not? Most European countries have public transport systems which are integrated and forward-looking, yet UK transport policy, by contrast, appears to be a model of muddle and mediocrity. Why for instance is the British Government so ready to approve public funding for road links to the Channel Tunnel, but so insistent that rail links (which would benefit the country generally) should be funded wholly by BR?

I am sure you are aware of numerous further arguments for relying less on roads, i.e. pollution, damage to buildings and health, the ereenhouse effect etc. I very much hope that you will reconsider transport policy as a matter of urgency, but fear very much that you will continue to bow to narrow political dogma which used to be the hallmark of the Labour Party. It seems ironical that you of all people who have played a major part in selling Conservative policies to the electorate in the past, seem to be quite incapable of selling your own brand of transport policy, but as they say in the advertising world, no matter how brilliant the salesman, you just cannot sell a bad product.

> Charles F Morgan 41 Gallagher's Mead Andover Hants SP103BP

Main lining in Europe

Talks are currently under way to establish a European federation for the promotion and development of rail transport. One of the prime movers is the Verkehrsforum Bahn, the promotional arm of Deutsche Bundesbahn

The planned federation would involve other Euopean railways and the rail manufacturing industry. RDS is already building up its contacts abroad. As we learn from each other, the campaign for better railways in Britain can only be strengthened.

General Secretary Trevor Garrod approached the various transport ministries and railway undertakings for information about their electrification policies.

The most useful replies came from West Germany, Denmark and Luxembourg which are among the most prosperous countries in Europe.

The Deutsche Bundesbahn in West Germany carries 87 per cent of its traffic by electric train. Over 40 per cent of the network is electrified. The only large city without electric trains is Kiel which has a population of 258 000. The only areas without mainline electric trains are Schleswig-Holstein in the far north and eastern Bavaria, near the Czech border.

The Transport Ministry says applications from DB to electrify lines are not normally refused. The criteria are economic and take into account operational efficiency and cutting journey times. In recent years, regional and local government have invested their own cash to get electrification on lines which have not satisfied purely commercial criteria.

In Luxembourg 80 per cent of the traffic is already electric. On the remaining diesel-operated section between Kautenbach and Gouvy, the wires are due to go up soon. The chief civil

engineer of Luxembourg National Railways can proudly announce that his network will be completely electrified by 1993/4.

The greater convenience for travellers and higher speeds give a commnercial advantage as well as an operational benefit but the Luxembourg Government is also happy to say it took the environmental prize of reducing noise and pollution into account.

In Denmark the environment is also a key factor in the accounts. The Danish State Railways plan to electrify all their main lines by the year 2000 which will involve 1065 km of the 2344 km

"The criteria have been partly financial, but especially, they have concerned the environment and the supply of energy," said DSB. A return on investment of only four per cent is required, compared to eight per cent in Britain.

The Danes are also building a 20 km rail tunnel under the Great Belt, reopening lines and staions in Jutland and considering a line to Sweden, either over or under the Sound.

RDS vice-chairman Steve Wilkinson is examining continental attitudes towards the transport of

hazardous goods. Laws passed in 1975 and 1988 forbid the carriage of certain goods by road in West Germany if they could go by rail. Steve is now examining the policies of other countries.

RDS is gradually increasing its file of members with language skills. Members with useful contacts abroad, particularly in the field of environment, transport, commerce or industry, are urged to drop a line to Trevor Garrod.

Automatic train control equipment is to be made by a new company called AT Signal System, based in Stockholm. It is 75 per cent owned by the Italian Ansaldo Transporti company and 25 per cent by the Swedish Standard Radio and

Robots are to be used in Paris to clean Metro trains and stations. Early versions will summon assistance when encountering obstructions. Later versions will ask passengers to move.

Public expenditure on transport

1984 1985 1987 1988 1989 3209 3385 3629 3827 Roads BR 79 87 72 82 Source: HMSO In £ millions

The Government should make speedy decisions about large-scale investment in British Rail, former BR chairman Sir Peter Parker told Railwatch in an exclusive interview.

"We need now to set a course on some of the major decisions," he said. "There is a great public belief in the future of the railways. Anyone who takes the environment seriously, knows that the railways are the best answer

"Compared to the competition, they make far less noise and pollution, cause far less environmental stress, consume far less energy and create far less mayhem in terms of fatal ities and serious injuries."

But he added: "We seem unable in this country to grasp that bouquet of nettles called the future. We are too adversarial.

"It is maddening how slow we are in this country at making big decisions."

Channel Tunnel freight from Europe, destined for Hastings in Sussex, will have to travel all the way to Willesden, London, before it can be despatched back to Hastings.

That was the dispiriting revelation from David Mitchell of the Freight Transport Association when he spoke to an RDS seminar in Ashford.

He stressed that there needed to be good services for the regions. Customs clearances should be done at terminals, rather than Willesden.

He also warned that hopes of the future belonging to swap bodies could be dashed because that service is only being marketed to hauliers, rather than directly to manufacturers and other businesses.

He added to the gloom by saying that Eurotunnel sees a shift in emphasis away from through rail freight towards road-freight shuttles.

Another speaker, European MP Ben Patterson. brought some joy amid the gloom with news that the European Community was questioning the need for new roads and had begun to draw up a Community Railways Policy for 1992.

The next seminar has been arranged for Saturday 19 May 1990.

Victory: British Rail has withdrawn its plans to close the 20-mile route from Gainsborough to Barnetby. Efforts by RDS and local groups helped achieve nearly 400 objections on a line which BR said only 17 people a day used. There is now an increasing awareness locally of the need to preserve the line and BR is to hold talks with Lincolnshire and Humberside county councils about possible contributions to funding and marketing the services. Two local groups now need support. If you can help, contact Phil Hewson, 1B Bigby High Road, Brigg, South Humberside DN20 9HB or David Timsley, 30 Arthur Road, Gainsborough, Lines DN21

Photo winners: First and second prize in the RDS photographic contest were taken by John C Baker with third prize going to Railwatch editor Ray King. The runners-up were John Fishman and another Ray King (no relation) from Diss.

Oxford hopes: A whole range of new services and stations around Oxford, Aylesbury and Milton Keynes were considered in a feasibility report by consultants Kennedy Henderson. Local politicians are now deciding what funds they are prepared to offer. Provincial plans for a

NEWSWATCH

Sprinter from Swindon to Peterborough are expected to be profitable right from the start. Rail campaigners say some of the more expensive options could be achieved by using second-hand units, rather than the new equipment specified by the consultants.

Lottery winners: December: Mrs M A Wright, Harpenden £30.75, Mrs Elizabeth Norris. Kenil-Harpenden E30.75, Mrs Elizabeth Norris, Kenil-worth, £15.37, Paul Keepin, Wisbech £7.69, Anthony Emmerson, Belfast £7.69, Prize pool £61.50, January: P Hutchinson, Oxhey £34.50, D McCutcheon, Portsmouth £17.26, Roger Dewhurst, Southampton £8.62, C Skinner, War-ley £8.62, Prize pool £69, February: A J Mac-Beath, Grange over Sands £48.25, A J Boul-twood, Edgware £24.30, Brian Hastings, Scunthorpe £12.06, A C Wright, Wadhurst £12.06, Prize pool £96. £12.06, Prize pool £96.

On the level: All the accidents reported at automatic level crossings in 1988 were caused by motorists, according to the report of the Railway Inpectorate. Many motorists seem willing to disregard the traffic lights and take chances at these crossings. By doing so, they not only place their own and their passengers lives at risk but also endanger the crews and passengers of trains.

Throughout the year, more than 300 train accidents (a quarter of the total) were blamed on vandalism. The chief inspector Mr R J Seymour warns: "Wilful acts of destruction like this are deplorable, but they must unfortunately be regarded as reasonably foreseeable in certain areas."

Israel is considering expanding its railway system, including building a 106-mile line across the desert to Eilat on the Red Sea, as a way of cutting its appalling road casualty rate which is three times that of Europe.

Win £400 and help RDS: Tickets for the Railway Development Draw are enclosed with this issue of Railwatch. The prizes are 1st £400, 2nd £200, 3rd £100. All members should try to sell these tickets, and, we hope, ask Reg Snow for a further supply. The draw will help to pay for many of the activities which have been organised for Rail Development Week.

Questions and Answers is a new RDS leaflet aimed at providing instant replies to our opponents. Examples are : Are railways inflexible and overstaffed? Isn't building new roads the best way to relieve congestion? You can have the advantage in any argument by getting this leaflet, available free from Roland White (address back page)

People: RDS administration officer Reg Snow is now at home after being seriously ill and spending time in hospital. We wish him a good

The new treasurer of RDS is David Bigg of Eye Level, 76 Maldon Road, Witham, Essex.

The society now has an assistant membership secretary in the shape of Carl Kirkham, 28 Dunmore Road, Chelmer Village, Chelmsford

'Grasp the nettle now' ********Rail Development Week******** BRANCHES

Saturday 24

Cambridge - St Ives: Special train

There are four departures, at 10.10, 11.50, 13.30 and 16.00 with a 10-minute turn-round at Swa-vesey. Passengers can stay there longer if they like, sampling the walks along the River Ouse and returning on a later train. The price is £3.50 return to Swavesey or £2.50 return to Oaking-

London: Visit to Victoria signalling centre at Clapham Junction. Ticket only. Skipton: Friends of the Settle - Carslisle AGM

Birmingham: A celebration of the Cross-City line electrification. The foyer of Dr Johnson House, 7,30pm.

London: Speaker Rufus Barnes (of the London Regional Passenger Committee) who is calling for a passengers charter. Friends Meeting House, Euston Road, 7pm

Wednesday 28

Ashchurch: To consider reopening of Ashchurch station, Gloucestershire. Ray Shill building. Lee Walk, Northway, Ashchurch. 7pm

Thursday 29

Manchester: Launch of Rail Strategy for the North West (36 pages) and promotion of Peaks and Plains by Rail. Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry Conference Centre, Lower Byrom Street.

Knutsford: Speaker Richard Watts on station restoration. Methodist Church Hall 7.30 pm.

Birmingham: Presentation on Midland Metro Dr Johnson House, 7,30pm.

London: Crossrail exhibition and leafleting at Paddington.

Saturday 31

Edinburgh: Speaker Councillor David Begg of Lothian District Council and RDS Scotland AGM. Friends Meting House. 1.30pm

Huddersfield: Talk by Yorkshire Post transport correspondent Alan Whitehouse at 2 pm, after luncheon and Yorkshire branch AGM. Polish Club, Fitzwilliam Street.

Manchester: All North-West user groups in joint meeting with North-West Transport Users Consultative Committee.

Dyfed: Launch of the West Wales Rail Users Association. Queens Hall, Narberth. 2pm

London: Crossrail exhibition and leafleting at Paddington.

London: Visit to Victoria signalling centre at Clapham Junction (ticket only)

Other meetings to be advertised locally:

At Cardiff (with Light Rail Transit Association) for an evening seminar on light rail. Hosted by Gower Freight Services.

Also at Hailsham, Watford and Hastings

London Paddington (Friday and Saturday), Eastleigh, Cambridge station foyer, Cambridge Building Society, Reading Civic Centre.



John C Baker's picture of a 321 unit passing Shepreth junction

At libraries: Cambridge Central, Sheffield Central, Rotherham, Grimsby, Cleethorpes, Scunthorpe, Sleaford, Durham (19th-24th).

Leofleting

House to house: Meldreth and Melbourn, Cambs

Rail for the Future A Rail Strategy for the North West

Yorkshire Rail Development Strategy (Ideas for exploiting the county's network to its full potential. Reopenings, electrification, neww stations and services, light rail and freight opportunities, suggestions for rail financing other than privatisation.)

Rail Strategy for East Anglia 2 Rail Strategy for Surrey North Fast Rail Review Midland Mainliner Report on Heathrow rail access New links in the Watford area Coastway potential

Sir Robert Reid who retires this month from his position as chairman of British Rail sent a special message to RDS:-

I was delighted to hear about Railway Development Week. Without doubt these are exciting times for the development of railways. is investing almost £5 billion over the next five years - half of that on new trains, the rest on equipment and stations.

In the next decade, the Channel Tunnel will link us directly with our colleagues in mainland Europe and this, I believe, will be but one of the exciting challenges ahead.

I have no doubt RDS will seek to widen the public awareness of these opportunities as well as continuing its well-established promotion of local opportunities.

********** 24 - 31 March 1990 *********

The Railway Development Week song

Railway Revival

There's a railway revival going on There's a railway revival going on 'Cause rail's got no real rival, and we need it for survival

There's a railway regival going on

Everybody wants to keep the countryside wide *

Everybody wants the city breathing healthy and clean

Everybody's into saving power, at 90 miles an There's a railway revival going on

Nobody needs a near miss or an airport delay Nobody picks a pile-up on an eight-lane Nobody wants to race road hogs in rain and wind and fog

There's a railway revival going on

Forty 35-tonne lorries chewing up the road Forty wagons, one train, can slide away the load North to South, and East to West aboard the

There's a railway revival going on

Listen to the rush-hour roads roar, and curses fill

We don't knock down the neighbourhood to the jams elsewhere

'Cause when we use our brains, we put the into trains

There's a railway revival going on

The song has been recorded on cassette and is available for £2.50 (post free) from: Helen Broadbent, 92 Hillview Drive, Clarkston, Glasgow G76 7JD.

The West Wales Users Group is on the verge of being put on a formal footing with a proper constitution. Following informal meetings at Tenby, the group was planning to arrange a public meeting in Narberth during Rail Development Week.

The group will cover the three Pembrokeshire routes running from Milford Haven, Pembroke Dock and Fishguard Harbour to Swansea. The major aim of the association is to press for the retention of services on these three routes, as well as calling for improvements to stations and infrastructure. The feeling of the meetings was that the name Pembrokeshire should be incorporated into the association's name.

During the coming months, we hope to lobby for rebuilding and/or resiting of Milford Haven station, to continue asking for automatic level crossings between Manorbier and Pembroke Dock, as well as carrying out surveys, already begun, into potential usage of reopened stations at Templeton and on the Fishguard line.

Any Pembrokeshire "exiles" who may wish to join the association, can write to me at Rozel, 16 Lady Park, Tenby, Dyfed, SA70 8JH. The annual subscription is £2. D G Brown

Lancashire and Cumbria

A limited service is to be operated by BR from May on the Blackburn - Hellifield line. There will be four return journeys from Manchester to Clitheroe on Saturdays and one Manchester/ Blackpool to Carlisle journey on Sundays.

The upgrading of Clitheroe station has been agreed and a sum of £98 000 is to be spent on it. The prospects for the early reopening of Whalley station, costing £110 000, look good. The local authorities will look at funding it in the next financial year.

Our corporate member, Ribble Valley Rail, welcome these developments but is concerned at the timings of the Sunday service. An early meeting with BR is being sought.

Timetable changes on the Settle - Carlisle are causing concern among the local authorities steering group which is also worried about overcrowding this summer. Failure of the class 158 Express units to appear means the service will be operated by class 31 diesel locomotives with five coaches. The service is being slowed down. It seems the class 47 diesel locos have been "borrowed" to maintain the TransPennine

Delays in delivering new vehicles for Provincial are worrying the branch. Improvements planned for May (such as three TransPennine trains an hour between Manchester and Leeds and half-hourly services between Manchester and Southport) have been postponed.

We are also concerned about cuts recently announced to the Public Service Obligation grant. We have asked user groups to write to their local MPs explaining what the cut will mean for their line. Individual members have also been urged to write to MPs.

Our corporate member, the Ormskirk Preston Travellers" Association, has held two successful public meetings about the proposed timetable on the West Lancashire line from May. The association is concerned that the 50 per cent cut in peak hour services could lose up to 240 passengers a day from the line. This represents a 25 per cent of the current daily usage of the line. A report commissioned by the association from Ron Cotton advocates extending the service from Preston to Blackpool South.

Richard Watts

ANNUAL ROAD DEATHS: 5,052 ANNUAL RAIL DEATHS: 40

BRANCHES

Midlands

Support is gaining ground across the South Midlands for the extension of Marylebone trains beyond Banbury to Leamington Spa and Stratford upon Avon. The new Networker Turbo trains start running next year and their extension into Provincial territory would fill the vacuum left by withdrawn and non-stop InterCity trains. They could also replace the Leamington -Stratford shuttle trains. The major tourist attractions of Stratford and Warwick are significant traffic objectives for Chiltern line services.

The quest for a new station at Kingsbury between Tamworth and New Street still awaits decisions on funding from Warwickshire and the European Commission. New stopping services are planned for which a crossover would be required at Tamworth. About one third of the cost of the station has already been promised by district and parish councils as well as the actions committee.

Walsall's train services will benefit in May from the opening of two new stations at Broad Lane (near Bloxwich) and at Tame Bridge (near Bescot). Bescot station is to have its platform widened and improved in time for the opening of the nearby Walsall football stadium in August.

The last timetabled train from Aston to Stechford will run on 11 May, leaving the "cut-off" line to InterCity and freight traffic.

The Rover Car Company has decided to increase its use of rail for taking delivery of raw materials and for dispatching new vehicles from both Longbridge and Cowley. The stub of the former Halesowen branch still exists at Longbridge, serving an extensive spread of sidings for the car works.

Severnside

The importance of having diversionary routes was illustrated by the February flooding. As a safety precaution, while the River Severn was in flood, Newport to Gloucester trains were terminated at a temporary platform at Over Junction, near Gloucester. It may be months before trains are allowed to resume running into Gloucester.

Light Rail: Local authorities are considering rail restoration and new routes in the Cheltenham. Gloucester and Swindon areas as a way of tackling road congestion and serving new housing estates.

Reopening priorities: Public interest is swinging to support many years of campaigning in Gloucestershire. The society will be included in a working party to examine priorities. County, district and parish councillors will take part.

Yate: The replacment station is well used with as many as 150 passengers alighting there from the 16.12 Taunton to Gloucester.

Eric Barbery

East Anglia

Financial support for evening trains in East Anglia is being given by seven district councils, as well as Suffolk and Norfolk County Councils. BR has assured us that the late-night trains on the East Suffolk line will continue until October at least. The East Suffolk Travellers Association (an RDS corporate member) has produced thousands of leaflets which are being distributed up and down the line to publicise them.

A public meeting was held in Wymondham to reform the Breckland Line Users Association for the Norwich - Ely line. Now RDS is conducting a similar campaign to form a users group for stations between Ipswich and Bury St Edmunds, most of which have never had a users group.

Provincial wants to alter the pattern of services on this line, and others, so that stops at rural stations are confined to peak periods, with trains running fast or semi-fast for most of the day. If this is to happen, more rolling stock is needed so a balanced mixture of both fast and stopping trains can be operated. In the meantime, passengers at rural stations should not be left without trains, especially when there is no alternative public transport.

An RDS exhibition will be held in Lowestoft central library for a week from 14 May and in Ipswich central library for the first week of December. Trevor Garrod

Scotland

Freight lines could be used for passenger and metro services, according to a consultative document on public transport from Strathelyde Regional Council. The proposals are welcome but there is no guarantee of funding and they are overshadowed by road building plans - the largest urban motorway proposals in Europe.

In Lothian, the principle is accepted that rail and metro should be built, instead of motorways. We will continue to point out the difference in attitude between these two Labour-controlled regions, as the elections approach.

Strathclyde still amazingly opposes the St John Link, 200 yards of new track in the city centre, which could unite the North and South electrics and provide cross-city travel. The region says there is no demand for cross-city travel. If true, Glasgow would be unique in Europe. Glasgow's streets are in fact clogged with buses trying to provide just such a service in an inadequate way.

The former Paisley Canal line is to reopen as far as Paisley. Of course it should never have closed in the first place. We are also promised the reopening of New Cumnock station on the Dumfries - Kilmarnock line, due partly to pressure from our member Graham Lund.

Douglas Smart

Yorkshire

Plans are being put forward for new curves in South and West Yorkshire to improve operating conditions. One Bill is already before Parliament to build a second track on the Holmes chord which takes trains from Sheffield into Rotherham. Central

Considerations is also being given to constructing a chord from the Leeds to Selby line at Hambleton which would connect with the up East Coast main line in order to allow coal trains from Gascoigne Wood colliery to reach Drax power station. At present coal trains from Drax and Egborough power stations pass through Castleford where there is a level crossing which spends much of the 24 hours closed to road traffic. Through trains from Egborough would continue to use this route. Diverting the trains from Drax, however, would relieve the level crossing problem in Castleford. It would be necessary to build a second chord at Henshall to give access from the East Coast main line to the Goole line.

In an effort to relieve the traffic congestion in Leeds, there are plans to re-lay the line along the old trackbed from Crossgates to Wetherby, as far

TEN DEADLY YEARS

Road deaths 62,740 Rail deaths 791

(1978-1988 inclusive) Source: HMSO

as Scholes or possibly further, to the A64 York -Leeds road. Five new stations would be opened. Park and ride facilities would be provided for the benefit of thousands of motorists coming into Leeds.

To divert the carriage of hazardous chemicals by road, there are plans to give a rail connection to the ICI dve works near Huddersfield. This would involve relaying the line for part of the way along the old track bed between Deighton and Kirkburton.

Shortage of rolling stock has led to the replacement of the evening commuter train from York to Selby and Doncaster by a single decker

The ban on bicycles on the Wolds line between Hull and Scarborough was highlighted in December when a 62-year-old cyclist whose bicycle had broken down, was forced to wheel it back from Bridlington to Hull, a distance of about 35 miles. It now seems that if he taken the wheels off, he could have taken the cycle by rail classed as a parcel.

The branch has published its Yorkshire Rail Review , edited by David Pickersgill, which describes the rail network, analyses quality of service, the BR sectors, network developments and rail user groups. Other branches might consider producing their own.

Denis Bradbury West Yorkshire Reopening: After a gap of 24 years, passengers trains will return to the Wakefield - Pontefract line in May 1991 as part of West Yorkshire PTA's rail development programme. New stations will be built at Streethouse, Featherstone, and Pontefract Tanshelf while Pontefract Monkhill will undergo major improvement.

An initial hourly Wakefield - Pontefract service will eventually give way to a full Leeds -Wakefield - Knottingley operation once rolling stock shortages and Leeds capacity constraints are solved, it is to be hoped, by 1993.

Local users organisation, the Pontefract and District Rail Action Group, has welcomed the initiative and is pressing for further developments, including diversion of the Sheffield -York local service via Barnsley, Wakefield and Pontefract Monkhill, and reopening of the Knottingley - Shaftholme junction freight line to link the towns of Castleford, Pontefract and Knottingley with the East Coast main line at David Pickersgill

London and Home Counties

Our third Channel Links seminar will be at Ashford, Kent, on Saturday 19 May, A full report of the last seminar (on 2 December 1989) is available for £2. For this and/or applications to attend the next one, write to H Trevor Jones at Flat 2, 11 Guildford Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1SW (allow for delay because of mail

Brian Hart and local councils will be organising a seminar for later in the year to promote reopening of Uckfield - Lewes.

We will be promoting Crossrail at Paddington and David Bigg will be organising a promotion of services from Essex to the West Midlands via the North London line and Milton Keynes.

We will be concentrating on library exhibitions at Eastbourne, Bexhill and Hastings to promote both the Coastway services from Portsmouth and Southampton to Hastings and Ashford via Brighton. We will also be calling for reopening of Polegate - Hailsham as a light rail route.

Lionel Boylett retired as branch secretary at our 14 February AGM. His successor is John Helm. H Trevor Jones PLATFORM

Think big

The proposed Rails to Prosperity needs to address the problem of corridors which have been earmarked for major roads.

As a start, an integrated bus network linking all major towns with railheads would alleviate transport deprivation. But we also need to expand the rail network to make real inroads on road traffic levels.

RDS should view the planned £12 billion roads budget as an indicator of the scale of the rail expansion budget it should be aiming at to relieve us of the scourge of excessive road traffic.

Probably the most important trunk route would be Oxford - Milton Keynes - Ridgmont -Flitwick - Hitchin - Stevenage - Ware - Harlow Stansted Airport - Braintree - Witham -Colchester. Other sample routes which corres-

pond to existing or proposed trunk road corridors might be:- Ipswich - Cambridge - St Ives - Huntingdon - Wellingborough - Northampton - Birmingham.

Liverpool - Manchester - Penistone - Barnsley -Doncaster - Humberside.

Leeds - Settle - Carlisle - Dumfries - Stranraer (for Ireland).

Light rail technology offers the flexibility to restore services economically for corridors of primary rather than trunk status (to use road terminology).

Sample routes in the Home Counties could be:-Bedford - St Neots - Cambridge - Haverhill -Sudbury - Colchester.

Hitchin - Luton Airport - Luton - Dunstable -Cheddington - Aylesbury.

Chesham - Rickmansworth - Watford - St Albans - Hatfield - Hertford - Ware.

Simon Norton 6 Hertford Street Cambridge CB43AG

Time to re-lay

After joining RDS last December, I was delighted to read of several proposed reopenings and re-laying schemes which would open up former through routes, like the Bedford - Sandy, Walsall - Lichfield and the Ripon Line Reinstatement Association (which I've just joined).

May I congratulate their proposers for such positive initiatve. I regret not joining RDS earlier but was blinkered by being too involved with preserved railways.

These re-laying schemes must be pursued with utmost urgency (electrification in most cases can wait) in view of the recent growth in rail traffic, the Channel Tunnel, the increasing awareness of Green issues and environmental benefits of rail. and the fact that trackbeds are being built on.

Another important relaying scheme is the reopening of part (as much as possible I hope) of the former Great Central line.

There was a serious proposal early last year by Andrew Gritten and the Central Railway Group

LONDON RUSH-HOUR

980,000

Public transport Private transport

177,000

to reopen it from Calvert (Bucks) to near Shawell, four miles north of Rugby in the V of the M1 and M6 junction, and build a freight terminal there for Channel Tunnel freight. This would have been financed by one or more merchant banks.

I've since heard that they would relay the Grendon Underwood - Ashendon Junction line and that they would consider reinstating passenger trains.

I'd like to see this scheme extended to Leicester (Western Boulevard/Upperton Road) where Vic Berry Railway Division yard is. This whole area. called Bede Island, is due for redevelopment by British Urban Development Ltd. Vic Berry and other merchants will have to find new sites.

This would leave an area large enough for a station and freight yard, already linked to the Midland main line. This could provide the missing Loughborough - Leicester - Oxford link, via Brackley, Calvert and Bicester, though it would require a double reversal at Leicester.

Severe obstacles might have to be overcome with the compulsory powers of a parliamentary bill. Large outside finance (most likely European) would also be needed to rebuild the Brackley viaduct and tunnel under the M6.

J Longstaffe 35 Kingsley Avenue Rugby CV21 4JY

Gauge points

Several points in the article on Berne Gauge conversion (Railwatch 42) need clarification.

RDS policy was NOT agreed with BR and the Private Wagon Federation. It happens to coincide with their views in some areas and varies from them in others.

Spain has now withdrawn its plans to convert PART of its broad gauge network to standard track gauge for precisely the same reasons that RDS objects to partial Berne Gauge conversion.

The sting in the tail for Spanish conversion would have been the closure of thousands of miles of branch lines as part of the overall package. The Spanish government found this politically unacceptable. Can we be certain a British government would find such an option equally unacceptable?

Jeremy Gotch's comments (Railwatch 42 page three) sums up the dangers by mentioning car distributors wanting Berne Gauge from the tunnel mouth to Sheerness, Kent. Presumably they would distribute throughout Britain by road from there.

The same would be true wherever the railhead was situated. Whether it was the M25, Rugby or even Leeds, the rest of the network could say goodbye to international traffic and the contribution we are looking for towards overall revenue.

George Boyle 200 Buxton Road Furness Vale Stockport SK12 7PX

The wrong road

I have heard that most families in the American state of Alabama have three or even four cars. The age limit for driving is 25 and about half the high school pupils drive to school which means even schools have to have large car parks.

Car ownership is said to be "essential" because public transport hardly exists. It seem to me that there are many people in Britain who look forward to such a situation in this country. I'm sure West Sussex County Council does, judging by the emphasis given to new roads and parking

areas contrasted with their minimal support for buses and negligible contributions to British Rail.

Government policy seems to be that the car is the primary method of transport, and that everybody should have one and that road space should be provided to maximise car use. As a result, there is a great risk that BR will be reduced to a "shop and office hours" service.

On strictly business grounds, a two-shift rather than a three-shift operating system in BR, with no Sunday or Saturday services, Network SouthEast might well become reasonably profitable. This has already happened in the bus world.

> Stanley Allchin 16 Mulberry Court Pagham. Bognor Regis

Time to shout

I feel there is a need for a strong pro-rail voice in addition to RDS which will make more aggressive comments on matters relating in particular to the Channel Tunnel. Such a voice should be heard advocating not one, but a dozen TGV-style high-speed rail routes in Britain, plus Berne Gauge or German gauge freight routes, and other views which might reflect the sentiments of RDS members but which the RDS might not wish to voice for reasons of compromising its credibility.

> Graham Nalty 6 Mill Close Borrowash

Straighten up

I would prefer to see some of the gaps in the West Coast main line filled first, but if electrification of the Midland line is eventually agreed, then let's ensure that goods yards and other BR land in the vicinity of stations, many of which lie on sharp curves, are retained so that those curves can be

The brake wear and energy wastage currently associated with repeatedly bringing a 125 down from 100 mph to the speed restrictions at Market Harborough, Wellingborough and other places must be considerable.

Those curves should be eased as soon as possible, certainly ahead of electrification. Once the wires are up, it will be too late. If the Government is really interested in energy conservation and the greenhouse effect, it would happily reimburse BR for the cost!

> 41 Fairmead Avenue Harpenden Herts AL 5UD

Peace train

The Keep the Lines Open movement picketed Sinn Fein's annual conference on February 3 to inform the international media of its grotesque anti-rail policies which have been expressed in an intensive bombing campaign against railways in Northern Ireland. Other peace-loving groups were involved and placards were carried in all the main European languages.

It is hoped international exposure of SF's real aims and activities will create difficulties for it in raising funds and support. Some time ago the party was able to cast itself in a sufficiently favourable light to make friends with Green movements in other countries. Perhaps groups such as these would be less than impressed with Sinn Fein's apparent transport policies, implemented through the IRA.

Ian C Downey 6 Corbusier Close Norwood, Waterford Ireland

Poll tax threat to rail lines

By Andrew Macfarlane

Many vulnerable rail lines and passenger initiatives could be threatened by the advent of the poll tax.

Revenue support from shire counties would disappear with the introduction of the new tax, warned *Derek Bateman* chairman of Cheshire County Council's public transport committee.

At the moment, the shires were topping up the public sector obligation grant which came from central government. The amount varied from small amounts paid to Network SouthEast to major sums of cash for new services in the South Wales valleys.

Shortage of cash would be a major problem for local government following the introduction of the poll tax.

Mr Bateman, speaking at a conference on the Future of British Rail on February 13, also warned that BR sectorisation was already a problem to councils. InterCity and Provincial have conflicting objectives and this caused timetable difficulties.

BR's own cash shortage now meant that station refurbishment and resignalling schemes were being deferred.

The Monopolies and Mergers Commission had suggested that the shires should take on responsibility for local rail services. But that would put them in an impossible situation where they were just picking up the pieces, as with bus deregulation.

He said there was a need to ensure that the PSO grant was "ring fenced" to ensure that other services like education did not have to be cut.

Rail was not a business and was part of the country's essential infrastructure. It already competed with other transport modes and he questioned why we should want to privatise the railways. Author Paul Salveson told the conference that regional transport authorities were needed, linked to a new regional system of government.

Mr Salveson, whose new book outlines his "radical alternative to privatisation" said the RTAs should have larger budgets than the present Passenger Transport Authorities and could specify service levels, fares, timetables and station facilities.

They would also co-ordinate bus services and take over strategic highway planning from district councils.

He conceded that InterCity could be operated as a commercial organisation but said there should still be scope for grants to it so it could extend services to logical destinations which were not necessarily profitable, like Bradford.

The Labour spokesman on transport John Prescott also addressed the conference, organised by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies. He said the Government was anti-public transport but warned that transport would be a major political issue at the next election. There was a need for major investment on the European scale as well as integration of transport.

BR had the highest fares in Europe and the Government was not investing enough. The use of rail should be maximised and there was a need to restrict the use of the private car.

The British approach to the Channel Tunnel was a disaster, causing maximum environmental damage in the South East. The Government should take control of the project and provide a high-speed line to the tunnel. The part of the Act forbidding Government investment in rail had to be repealed.

The leader of the National Union of Railwaymen Jimmy Knapp said the market forces approach had contributed to accidents. Claims of enormous investment in BR were a myth.

There was a need for proper resources and adequate staffing to achieve a good service with safety.

Major General Lennox Napier of the Central Transport Consultative Committee said there was excessive overcrowding on BR and the quality of rail travel was declining.

There was a need for strategic long-term planning based on cost-benefit analysis. Passengers should not have to pay for this through higher fares.

The things they say

It is not true that rail investment has to meet more stringent criteria than road investment. Both are tested on the basis of an eight per cent return on investment.

Robert Atkins, Minister for Roads and Transport

The Government insists on looking at rail in cost/revenue terms. It should judge it like road in cost/benefit terms. This is what the French do. Cost/benefit assessments take into account such matters ar pollution and the relief of road congestion.

the rollef of road congestion. Stuart Cole, director of transport research at the Polytechnic of North London

Benefits counted for road schemes include time savings for motorists and accident savings, all social benefits, while rail schemes are judged solely on their cash profitability.

It is amazing that the Government continues to produce this misinformation in an attempt to sidestep their responsibility for the serious mishandling of London's transport. Sally Powell, Association of London Authorities

NEW BOOK OFFER

Rail for the Future is the latest book from RDS. It is available at a special pre-publication price of £1.80 (including post and packing). The offer closes on 31 May.

Thirty other books published by RDS are also available, including guides to touring the regions of Britain by train and specialist publications, looking at such topics as the Channel Tunnel, privatisation, and how to set up a rail users group. Prices range from 60p to £3.

Envelope re-use labels plugging the hazards of road travel compared to the safety of railways and back numbers of Railwatch are also on offer.

To order Rail for the Future, write to Alan Harwood at 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN.

For a free list of RDS publications, send Alan an SAE.

READ YOURSELF IN

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Spring clearance: 1990 RDS pocket diary £1.50 (post free). Scotland by Rail 1st edition £1.50 (post free) from Alan Harwood.

The need for a London transport authority: A conference on urban transport in London and the South East will take place on 24 June 1990 at the Cathedral Conference Centre in Victoria, London. RDS members are offered a concessionary rate of £15 which will include morning coffee, banch, tea and conference papers. Details from Pat Crane on 01 361 4402

Rail Strategy for the North-West (36 page booklet) published 1990, available £2.25 from Richard Watts, 15 Stanley Avenue, Penwortham, Luncs PR1 9RB.

Special offer: Staying Off the Beaten Track is a bestseller among accommodation guides and can be useful to members travelling on business or for pleasure. RDS members will receive £18 worth of vouchers, which they can use against the cost of certain accommodation described in the book, if they mention they are RDS members when ordering it, £7.95 (post free), from Explore Britain, Alston, Cumbria CA9 3SL.

The annual general meeting of the South West branch will take place on Saturday 31 March at 1.30 pm in the conference room of the GWR Hotel at Exeter (opposite St David's station) to be followed by a public meeting.

British Rail: The Radical Alternative to Privatisation by Paul Salveson is available for £4.95 (including p&p) from the Centre for Economic Strategies, Albert House, St Mary's Parsonage, Manchester M3 2WJ