

# Back to the twilight zone

The reopened station of Corby returned to the twilight zone this month when BR withdrew its passenger trains. Government cost-cutting policies were blamed.

A few weeks before, Transport Secretary Cecil Parkinson told Tory party supporters in nearby Northampton that under-used services should be reduced to avoid "wasting tax payers' money".

But Corbyrail campaigner Elisabeth Jordan said the Government has kept BR too short of money to run a decent service and the local council was looking for ways of cutting expenditure following the introduction of the poll tax. Elisabeth also blamed BR for providing a run-down unreliable service on the shuttle service between Corby and Kettering with stock that was prone to breakdowns.

"It was so unattractive to businessmen that they continued to use their cars to connect with InterCity at Kettering," she said.

"Corby council which is controlled by Labour did not make any effort to publicise the service or encourage people to use it. They even sent officials to Kettering by car."

Yet this was after they put up £100,000 to get the service running in 1987 under the "Speller Act" and then two annual payments of £60,000 for revenue support.

Elisabeth added: "Often BR would provide buses or taxis when the stock broke down but people waiting at the station did not know. Only one of the three signalmen would use the public address system."

"Later the PA was vandalised when BR moved it from a pole to the top of the shelter. This all put people off using the service."

"But if Corby had a decent service, there would be plenty of custom."

She added: "We are hoping to interest people in a new Corby - Kettering - Wellingborough - Bedford service which would allow people to connect with Thameslink trains at Bedford and InterCity trains at both Kettering and Bedford. Corby, Kettering and Wellingborough have a combined population of 150,000."

"Unfortunately the Swindon - Peterborough service via Corby keeps being put off. Now it seems it's not planned until 1995."

"But now we are also suggesting a Provincial service from Melton Mowbray to Bedford via Corby."

David Fursdon of Corbyrail blamed BR for the failure of the service.

He said: "Fifty per cent of the trains did not run on time and BR used old rolling stock. People lost all confidence in the service because it was so unreliable."

**In the month that Corby lost its passenger**



Goodbye to all this: The lights go out for "clapped out" diesel trains which ran the shuttle service between Kettering and Corby until two weeks ago. JIM WADE'S picture shows Corby station at night.

trains, Public Transport Minister Michael Portillo was promoted. His next job is to oversee a review of the poll tax!

The new Minister for Public Transport is Roger Freeman, the MP for Kettering. Lack of local knowledge cannot therefore be used as an excuse for doing nothing in future.

The vast majority of people have always been opposed to the bulk of Britain's freight being carried by road as they are opposed to juggernauts coming down their street. Perhaps the occasional referendum could correct the

tendency of politicians not to represent the people's wishes.

Many other cuts were implemented when BR introduced its new timetable in May. Network SouthEast withdrew 200 coaches with the result that trains were shortened. As a result more commuters have to stand.

Now the people of Dunstable, Bedfordshire, have been denied a reopened rail passenger

**Turn to back page**

# Danger on the line

Thousands of people are killed every year on the roads but there is a Press and public outcry when a train crashes.

Former BR manager Stanley Hall points out how unjust this attitude is in his excellent book *Danger on the Line*.

He highlights how the minute examination of every train accident, followed by corrective action, has made rail travel so safe.

Mr Hall is well qualified to pronounce on BR safety. He worked on the railways for 40 years and chaired over 100 formal accident inquiries.

His book gives dramatic insight into the fires, hot axleboxes, buckled rail, carelessness and bad luck which have beset BR.

He says that at times British Rail has been virtually unmanageable since it was nationalised. It has been struggling to get its organisation right for 40 years and this has had an effect on safety attitudes.

He also reveals how, in a space of 10 years, BR became virtually a passenger-only railway following the sell-off of National Carriers to NFC which proved itself "no lover of railways" and transferred all its sundries traffic to road.

"It was one of the most astonishing transformations of the railway scene ever," he says.

But he insists closure of the Settle - Carlisle would have been the biggest mistake of all, so far as track maintenance is concerned.

He blames management for allowing the West Coast main line to deteriorate from being the "premier" line.

"The London Midland Region's attitude to its most important line seemed to be that as long as it was not unsafe, the passenger would have to put up with a rough ride," he says. "It seems

incredible that there are now more trains from London to Plymouth than there are from London to Glasgow."

Government double standards were revealed when four people were killed in a car crash at about the same time as four people died in the Glanrhyl railway bridge collapse.

Mr Hall asks: "Was there a full-scale public inquiry lasting four days and headed by a senior inspector from the Department of Transport? There was none."

"Did the inquest jury return a verdict of unlawful killing against the operators of the road system and the drivers of the road vehicles?"

"Were stringent measures taken to ensure that it could not happen again? No. Why do we apply such double standards to road and rail safety?"

He also criticises the Government for snubbing the Railway Inspectorate by appointing a QC to head the Clapham junction inquiry.

Secretary of State for Transport Cecil Parkinson could learn a good deal from this book.

As Mr Hall says: "A wise and prudent management will learn the lessons of history." That goes for governments too. *Danger on the Line* is a large format book with many pictures, published by Ian Allan. £13.95

**Electrifying:** An international conference and exhibition on Electric Transport, called ET90, is to be held in Basel, Switzerland from 12 - 14 November 1990. The conference is being organised by Dr Lewis Lesley of Liverpool Polytechnic and will focus on Europe's regional and suburban railways, metros, light rail, tram systems, trolleybuses, and electric cars and buses. Phone 051 207 3581 for details.



## What the papers say

InterCity is crowded, dirty and unreliable, according to a Which? report.

*The Times* 17 April 1990

Labour is considering incorporating into its manifesto, plans for a 190 mph new fast line from the Channel Tunnel to Scotland.

*The Times* 30 April 1990

The French are considering plans to spend £20 billion on 13 new high speed lines, one of which will link Paris with Strasbourg.

*Financial Times* 18 April 1990

BR should be given independence from the Government but should not be privatised, said Oxford University's Professor Bill Bradshaw. The railways should have a regulatory Of Rail body, similar to OfTel.

*Financial Times* 4 April 1990

Four out of five people believe the Government is doing too little to combat the greenhouse effect. One in 100 believed it was doing too much.

*Observer* 15 April 1990

A quarter of all lorries stopped on the A1 in Bedfordshire were overweight.

*Cambridge Evening News* 17 April 1990

Coca Cola has built a £1 million private siding at Dunkirk to connect its factory to the French railways. It will handle 300,000 tonnes a year by 1992.

*International Railway Journal* April 1990

Clacking keys of passengers' lap-top computers are annoying fellow InterCity travellers.

*Letter to The Guardian* 13 April 1990

The Government has ruled out curbing private cars to help the environment. Boosting public transport is impossible under existing policy, according to a Department of Transport document.

*The Guardian* 19 April 1990

Persistent poor quality costs BR £825 million a year in lost revenue, according to a rail managers survey.

*The Times* 9 March 1990

Cardiff's City line is so unreliable that passengers are switching to buses.

*Cardiff Independent* 14 February 1990

The National Consumer Council has backed the passengers' Charter drawn up by Rufus Barnes, secretary of the London Regional Passengers Committee. It calls for compensation for serious delays.

*Daily Telegraph* 23 April 1990

Tax concessions should be given on season tickets, not company cars, says the London Regional Passengers Committee.

*Daily Telegraph* 6 April 1990

Employers in the City are refusing to recruit people who live on the Southend - London route because train services are so unreliable.

*Daily Telegraph* 26 April 1990

Britain has opposed a Common Market plan to reduce carbon dioxide emissions (much of them come from car exhausts).

*Financial Times* 24 March 1990

The Department of Transport is refusing to allow Birmingham City Council which is "awash" with money for new roads to transfer funds to build light rail.

*Sunday Correspondent* 29 April 1990

In Sussex, BR has shown not the slightest intention of taking a share of increased traffic emanating from the Channel Tunnel.

*Bognor Observer* 29 March 1990

Higher fares drive people away from public transport and on to the roads, warns the House of Commons select committee on transport.

*The Times* 1 March 1990

# Open the way for trains

By JANE ANN LISTON

Nearly a quarter of a million people will be handicapped by the lack of a rail service when they travel to the British Open golf championship at St Andrews next month.

They will find that the nearest station to the home of golf is five miles away at Leuchars.

Traffic jams will be the inevitable result in and around this ancient university town as many people will drive rather than be bothered changing to a bus or taxi.

But STARLINK (St Andrews Rail Link) has a vision of something better. Founded in 1989, it wants to bring back the single-track line between Leuchars and St Andrews.

The line which was closed after the Beeching era will ease the golf traffic but will make it easier for St Andrews to find work. It will also reduce the damage to the environment.

It is now established that car drivers will not abandon their cars for a bus, but will for a train.

The 40-odd parking places at Leuchars fill up very quickly in the mornings, Saturdays as well as weekdays. As most of the cars are from St

Andrews, this suggests there is a demand for a commuting as well as a shopping service.

The 1,250 car drivers who travel from St Andrews to Dundee face regular delays on the Tay Road Bridge and most bus travellers have to endure a 40-minute journey via Tayport.

Those who commute by car to Edinburgh face delays at peak times on the Forth Road Bridge, which is nearing its capacity.

The 13,500 St Andrews could certainly support a train service which gives access to Dundee, Kirkcaldy and Edinburgh. The 4,000 students of Scotland's oldest university are also potential customers.

The closure of the St Andrews line was deeply unpopular, and the general opinion now is that it should never have been closed.

Since 1969, rail travel has become more popular, and the combined town and gown population has increased by more than 50 per cent.

The number of tourists, the main industry, has rocketed, partly due to new attractions such as the Sea Life Centre. When the British Golf Museum opens, it will attract even more.

The A91 often grinds to a halt, and no doubt

there will be complaints about access to the town during the Open.

All trains now stop at Leuchars (approximately 50 on Monday to Saturday and 30 on Sundays), where each year 100,000 passengers embark and the same number disembark. Most of those are coming to or from St Andrews. The total cost of reinstatement has been calculated at £4.75 million (£7.5 million allowing for price increases).

Unfortunately BR ripped up the track and demolished the bridges very quickly after the closure.

However, even £7.5 million compares very favourably with upgrading the A91 to dual-carriageway, which would cost £1 million per mile.

North East Fife district council has agreed to provide up to £5,000 for a feasibility study, which will probably cost £15,000 and the local MP Menzies Campbell and MEP Alex Falconer are supporting the campaign.

If you are interested in helping to put St Andrews back on line, contact Jane Ann Liston at 5, Whitehill Terrace, Largo Road, St Andrews, KY16 8RN, Fife, Scotland

# Running rings around London

By MICHAEL CATON

I should like to suggest a new passenger service, operated by 25 kV throughout, which would link East London and Essex directly with stations on the West Coast main line by using the North London Line.

Colchester, Chelmsford and the substantial population on the eastern side of the Greater London area have no through passenger service to the Midlands and the North West of England. Travel via London, requiring changes of train, is sufficient inconvenience to deter many people from rail travel.

Heavy use of the M25 is a clear demonstration of the demand for travel along the route and I can confirm this from the travel habits of residents of the London Borough of Havering where I live.

The combined population of the places I refer to above is probably greater than most provincial cities which have through services to other provincial centres.

A service of one train each way was tried a few years ago from Harwich to the Midlands and the North (via the the North London Line) but withdrawn because of lack of support.

However, this was seen as a boat train and, although it stopped at Shenfield and one or two other places, was not advertised and its existence seems to have been virtually unknown, certainly in this area.

The service was also introduced before the North London electrification was completed and journey times had to allow for locomotive changes. A faster schedule would now be possible.

The M25 is becoming ever more congested and travel along this motorway and the M1 is becoming increasingly unpleasant, especially at times when heavy lorries are out in large numbers.

The Government's recently announced plan to "solve the problem" by adding yet more

motorway lanes will be environmentally disastrous, very costly and cannot be put into effect for a number of years.

In any case, it will be self defeating since it will generate yet more traffic on the road system. The through rail service would attract some of the traffic now on the motorway and could be introduced immediately at modest cost and with zero environmental impact.

Two types of service could be envisaged with perhaps an InterCity locomotive-hauled service starting at Colchester, stopping at Chelmsford,

Shenfield, Romford and then Watford, Milton Keynes and on to Birmingham and/or Manchester.

A Network SouthEast service of electric multiple units could provide an hourly interval service from Colchester or Southend to Milton Keynes, providing for a wide range of commuter and optional travel in a similar way to Thameslink.

There could also be a parkway station where the M25 crosses the Great Eastern main line near Harold Wood.

## THE BATTLE FOR THE SETTLE & CARLISLE

by JAMES TOWLER

AT LAST! The inside story of British Rail's eight year struggle to close the Settle-Carlisle railway is revealed by former Yorkshire TUC chairman and current RDS Yorkshire Branch chairman, JAMES TOWLER. From his exclusive vantage point, the author chronicles the triumphs and disappointments of what became the largest campaign ever mounted to save a railway.

**EXPOSED!** The consumer watchdogs whose secretaries were seconded from BR and who often failed to represent the views of rail users.

**DECEIT!** How BR consistently denied that it planned to close the line whilst at the same time working to a closure plan.

**IGNORED!** How the overwhelming case for retention of the line was disregarded by the government.

Read all about the Battle of the Small Print, Wanton Neglect, and Ghost Trains! It's all contained in this, the story of the Railway Closure Proposal which attracted a record 22,150 objections. **A must for all supporters of rail development.** 336 pages. £8.95.

### LIGHT RAIL REVIEW 1

Editors: Michael Taplin & Peter Fox. A4 size. 96 pages. £5.95. This book contains an in-depth look at current and future light rail schemes in the UK and on the continent of Europe. It covers all aspects of light rail from the new technology used in design and construction to the operating requirements and procedures of a fully implemented network. Illustrated in colour and black and white, an essential source of reference on this increasingly important topic.

All these publications are available from shops, bookstalls or direct from: **PLATFORM 5 MAIL ORDER**, Lydgate House, Lydgate Lane, Sheffield, S10 5FH.

Please enclose postage and packing charge 10% of total (UK); 20% (Abroad). For a full list of titles available by mail order, please send SAE to the above address.

### RAMBLES BY RAIL

1: The Hope Valley Line  
Les Lumsden & Martin Smith. A6 size. 96 pages. £1.95. Rambles by Rail 1 contains directions for eighteen scenic walks in the beautiful Derbyshire countryside, all starting and finishing at Hope Valley line railway stations. The book presents an ideal opportunity to support local rail services and enjoy a day in the heart of the Peak District. A brief history of the line is also included, plus maps and illustrations.

## TREVOR GARROD'S VIEW



## Labouring under a delusion

I recently represented the society at the national conference of the Public Transport Information Unit, which consists mainly of councillors, transport operators and trade unions. Only five out of 150 delegates were from what might be termed the campaigning sector.

It was valuable to meet people who have power and influence over local public transport, to sell them our books, give them our leaflets and discuss issues with them.

Some of the council and trade union speakers waxed eloquent about the shortcomings of present Government transport policy and the need to elect a Labour Government which would introduce a proper integrated transport policy. Fine aims - as far as they go but things are not that simple. So far as we remember the Labour Government of 1974-9 cancelling the Channel Tunnel and bringing out a green paper proposing replacing trains with buses. Their record on investing in new locomotives and trains was not impressive either.

Some delegates were also reluctant to address

the question of hidden subsidies to company cars, presumably because the Transport Workers union is strong in car factories. The union is also one of the Labour Party's biggest paymasters.

Let us not forget that Labour politicians can be just as susceptible as those of other parties to the blandishments of the road lobby.

We must certainly encourage them to adopt pro-rail policies and commend the many Labour councils which have improved rail services, especially in the passenger transport authority areas.

But we must also argue constructively with them on ticklish points. Yes, some jobs may be lost because of company car curbs but a shift to public transport will create other jobs. T&GWU members can perhaps use their skills to build railway carriages or buses.

This is just one facet of the society's task, as a non-party organisation. We must put rail's case to ALL politicians currently in power or likely to have power and influence in the near future.



## Railway Development Week

### Out of the week came forth strength

Rail Development Week got off to an excellent start with the special train service between Cambridge and Swavesey on the former St Ives line. East Anglian branch chartered a four-car diesel multiple unit for four return trips on the spring Saturday.

It was operated as far as possible like an ordinary train would be if this line was reopened to passengers. There was no pre-booking. Single and return tickets were sold by RDS stewards on the train and over 2,000 journeys were made.

At Swavesey, arrangements were made with a farmer for passengers to park in a field next to the station. Push chairs and bicycles were carried without difficulty and every co-operation was received from BR management and staff.

Because of the demand, BR arranged for an extra three-car unit to be brought over from Norwich for the busy final run of the day.

Many members helped with leaflets and the media reacted positively.

Branch chairman Peter Wakefield said: "The message is getting through, though we may have to repeat the operation finally to convince the doubters."

Another special train is planned for the line on Saturday 23 June 1990 and there is also expected to be trains down the line on Cambridge's gala day on 29 September.

Other branches also staged successful events. South West branch had its best-ever attended meeting in Bristol.

The Yorkshire Rail Strategy was the front page lead story in both the Northern Echo and the Yorkshire Evening Press. It was also covered in detail by the Yorkshire Evening Post and the Bradford Telegraph & Argus. BBC Look North interviewed chairman James Towler and five local radio stations interviewed other members.

## NEWSWATCH

**Driving blind:** When Talkback, the magazine produced by Ford for company car users, conducted a survey of roads and highways, it was probably surprised by the response. Top of the list of suggestions for reducing road congestion was the need to improve rail services. Although 66 per cent chose this option, the finding was barely mentioned in the accompanying article which managed to conclude that road building should continue.

**Steaming ahead:** Nene Valley Railway is to start talks with Northamptonshire County Council for the acquisition of the redundant trackbed between Yarwell junction and Oundle with a view to running NVR trains between Peterborough and Oundle in the early part of the next century. The aim would be to provide a local service as well as tourist trains.

**Video appeal:** A generous donation of £500 (as a loan) has established a fund to enable an RDS video to be made. Other members wishing to make a loan or donation can contact the general secretary.



Goodbye to all this: Locomotive-hauled services to King's Lynn have been withdrawn in favour of diesel multiple units. NICK LEWIS'S picture shows a King's Lynn train at Ely.



## The Sprint to success

By ANDREW MACFARLANE

Good services on Provincial had brought spectacular results, sector chief Sidney Newey told members of the Railway Development Society.

There had been a 234 per cent increase in passengers on the North West to East Anglia services and a 120 per cent increase between Birmingham and Cardiff. Trans Pennine trains had attracted 34 per cent more custom.

On his last day as director of Provincial, Mr Newey told members at the annual general meeting at Manchester in May that Provincial had opened 103 stations since 1982 and planned to open 25 more in 1990.

Last year the sector had raised £260 million from fares while the Government had contributed £404 million and the passenger transport executives £90 million.

He admitted that Pacers and Sprinters would have to be made more reliable in the urban areas and, in the rural areas, longer turnrounds

introduced in May, should improve reliability particularly on the Cambrian lines.

Sprinters on the West Highland line however had been a "complete success". Also in Scotland, an hourly service was being introduced between Glasgow and Aberdeen from May.

Provincial knows that frequency and reliability will keep it ahead of the competition but improvements also had to be cost effective. "In our chosen markets, we aim to be the consumer's preferred choice for local and cross-country journeys," he said.

Road congestion in the Nottingham and Leicester areas had led to thoughts of railway line reopenings. Services to airports were also being developed and the Manchester airport link will pay for itself.

Long-distance two-car Sprinters cost around £700,000 a year to operate and could bring in £500,000 in revenue. Suburban services brought in less.

He said local authorities would have to provide

both capital and revenue support but there was scope for them to share in any profits. Nottingham county council will get 70 per cent of any revenue surplus on the reopened Worksop line. Leicestershire had a similar deal for the Ivanhoe line.

When new units were introduced on Scotrail East, costs had been cut by £5 million, while revenue had been boosted by 39 per cent from £8 million to £10 million.

The growing financial strength of Provincial allowed it to take risks in starting new services. Glenrothes will get a new station and if there was help with capital costs and Alloa would reopen. The next big improvements would be when high-performance 323 units replaced existing electric multiple units in Scotland, Manchester and Birmingham. Answering a question about the delays in supplying new 158 Express units, Mr Newey said there might be a financial claim against the makers.

"After a successful three years with Provincial, Mr Newey has now taken up a new post as assistant to railway chief executive John Welsby.

## The new face of your society

### AGM 90

Mr Bevan paid tribute to three executive members who stood down this year: John Barfield who continues as chairman of the parliamentary liaison committee, Andrew Macfarlane who is now chairman of North West branch and Richard Watts whose new job in the public transport department of Lancashire County Council means he must relinquish his offices in RDS.

Two members joined the executive, Chris Amundson and Trevor Jones (chairman of London and Home Counties branch).

Other members of the national executive for 1990 are: Philip Binatt, George Boyle, Helen

Broadbent, Chris Burton, Mike Crowhurst, Dave Sallery and Peter Wakefield.

The unsuccessful candidates for the executive were Anthony Wiggall, Bob Osborne, Simon Martin and Frank Tomlins.

Former Settle and Carlisle line project manager Ron Cotton has agreed to become a vice president of RDS, as has Ben Paterson, the European Parliament member who has been so supportive on the Channel Tunnel link issue.

The AGM called on the Government to increase BR's public sector obligation grant in line with inflation each year. It also urged the Government to lay down clear guidelines to Provincial and Network SouthEast concerning the level of service which it expects them to provide.

## Death by a thousand cuts

The withdrawal of locomotive-hauled trains on the Cambridge to King's Lynn line has angered the Fenline Users group who have called on their MPs to help.

The comfortable through trains (Mk 2 coaches hauled by class 47 locos) have been replaced by diesel multiple units which connect at Cambridge with electric multiple units from London.

East Anglian branch secretary Peter Harding said: "This is a totally retrograde step. It is absolutely disgraceful. I have been told it is to save £800,000 but they are going to drive away many passengers."

The second-rate service will last while the electrification scheme is completed. Then electric multiple unit trains will provide a through service once again.

Continual cuts in BR's Government grants have come at the moment when people are more willing to switch from using cars and lorries.

## NEWSWATCH

**Drawing ahead:** The society is hoping the national draw will put our finances in good order. Tickets were enclosed with the last issue of Railwatch but there is still time to get more from Reg Snow (address back page). First prize is £400, 2nd £200, 3rd £100. The draw will take place on 21 July so return your counterfoils to Reg Snow (address back page) in good time.

**Going local:** Derek Bateman will be the guest speaker at our 12th national conference of rail users. Mr Bateman is deputy leader of Cheshire County Council and chairman of the Shires Consortium. The theme of the conference will be railways and local authorities.

It will be held at Friends House, Euston Road, London on Saturday 17 November 1990 from 11 am to 4.30pm. If you would like details of the conference, please send a stamped, addressed envelope to John Lark, 7 Gloucester Avenue, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth NR31 7LT.

**LOTTERY WINNERS:** March: Norman Campbell, Loughborough £52.50, David Harvey, Lincoln £26.26, Roland White, Belmont £13.12, Elisabeth Jordan, Corby £13.12. April: E. Buttigieg, Croydon £52.25, G.T. Southon, Cambridge £26.30, R. Neville, Cardiff £13.06, David Randall, Peterborough £13.06, £104.50. May: Miss B. Easter, London £52.50, Hubert Snewin, Worthing £26.26, Miss P. Blackburn, Morecambe £13.12, Geoffrey Bate, Wolverhampton £13.12.

More and more people are joining the lottery, helping RDS and joining the list of winners. If you want take part, send an SAE for details to Dave Finch, 28 Neville Avenue, Kidderminster, Worcs DY11 7AL.

**On your bike:** A sponsored cycle ride is planned for 30 June 1990 to Mansfield, Notts. Trevor Garrod, Richard Pill and Clara Zilahi will be going. Others interested should contact Trevor Garrod.

**All you wanted to tell the road lobby:** A new eight-page leaflet with 22 questions and answers can be obtained free from John Bigny, 15 Plough Walk, Edenbridge, Kent TN8 6DU.

**Count on us:** More than 2,300 people now belong to RDS. Can you recruit a friend or colleague and help put more people back on the train? Our next target is 2,500.



## Read all about it

Wherever you may be going in Great Britain this summer, on holiday or for a short break, there is an RDS railguide for you.

In and Around London by Rail will be published this month, effectively completing our coverage of the country. Ian McGill has edited this new book, to which many members have contributed. It is a fatter volume than others in the series (96 pages), and goes out as far as Southend, the Chilterns, Hampton Court and Greenwich. Be sure to get your special offer copy from Alan Harwood (address back page) by sending £3.20 (post free). It is likely to sell quickly. An updated edition of North East by Rail is also being published this month. It includes more information on steam lines and centres, the new Sprinter services between Tyneside and South West Scotland, and the freight-only Weardale branch which now sees summer Sunday services. The book costs £3.30 (post free) from Alan. He can also supply any other railguide - and remember they make good presents. Send him an SAE for a list of publications.

**Rambles by Rail No 1 The Hope Valley Line** by Les Lumsdon and Martin Smith Platform 5, £1.95

It is difficult to convince some people that they can enjoy life without a car. But leaving the car at home can be one of the most liberating feelings.

Unfortunately rambles who enjoy a good walk in clean country air use smelly cars to get to areas of particular beauty even though there is often an environmentally more acceptable way of getting there.

To jolt those people out of their cars and to help the rest of us who do use trains, publishers Platform 5 have produced an excellent pocket book.

Rambles by Rail No 1 The Hope Valley Line details 17 walks in the heart of the Peak District using trains at beginning and end of journey.

**30 Years of Trainspotting** by John Stretton

£12.95 Unicorn Press 16 Laxton Gardens, Paddock Wood, Kent

The sight of an LMS Jubilee locomotive in 1955 set John Stretton off on a 30-year journey with the railways. He took photographs along the way and now 180 of them form the basis of this 128-page book. He recalls visits and excursions over a period of immense change on Britain's railways. Mr Stretton is the author of Steam on Shed and Leicestershire Railway Memories.

### Special Offers

In and Around London (new railguide) £3.20  
Fighting for Rail £1.70  
Bustitution (Why bus is not OK) £1.65

Also available:  
Settle-Carlisle Country (guide book) £6.25

All prices include p & p. Profits help RDS

Thirty other books published by RDS are also available, including guides to touring Britain's regions by train and specialist books, re-use labels and Railwatch back numbers.

Send orders for books and SAE for sales list to RDS Sales Officer, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN



# BRANCHES

## North Midlands

**Return Ticket:** A glossy leaflet called Robin Hood Line: The Return Ticket describes how the line linking Nottingham and Worksop via Mansfield could be reopened by 1992. Nottingham County Council has set aside £6 million for reinstating the track, axed by Beeching in 1964, and providing Sprinter trains.

It is hoped another £5 million, needed for the 11 stations, will come from district councils. The European Community and the private sector may make a small contribution. It will be impossible for the scheme to qualify for a Section 56 grant from central government unless the private sector comes up with something.

If the capital cost can be found, a Leeds University survey has shown that it should make an operating profit immediately.

Sadly British Rail is so strapped for cash that it has said it is unable to make any financial contribution to either the capital or operating costs of the project.

Malcolm Goodall

## Severnside

Our campaign for a new station at Ashchurch was boosted by the public meeting during Rail Development Week. It became clear that several local buses should be rerouted or augmented to make the station more useful to both residents and tourists.

There was considerable interest in the possibility of local firms using Sprinter trains for despatch and receipt of Red Star parcels, expanding an arrangement started at Lydney.

It seems commuting to both Gloucester and Birmingham could well take off if Ashchurch gets its station.

Stroud councillors have visited several sites with a view to opening more rail stations in the district council's area.

Eric Barbary

## Wessex

A useful meeting took place with officials of Southampton City Council. Jon Honeysett and Peter Madsen represented Wessex branch and Chris Amundson the RDS passenger committee. The proposed People Mover system for the city centre was discussed along with other ideas for increasing rail's share of the passenger market.

Our members put the case for a more frequent service on the newly electrified route to Fareham and Portsmouth, reopening of the Chandlers Ford and Waterside lines as well as a service to Ocean Village.

Trevor Garrod

## Yorkshire

British Rail's case for closing the Anlaby Road curve in Hull and the Gascoigne Wood curve near Milford, West Yorkshire, is strongly criticised by the Transport Users Consultative Committee.

The TUCC says it is hardly surprising that the loadings on the holiday trains using the Anlaby Road curve have been low when no mention is made of the existence of these trains in either the 1989 or 1990 holiday maker brochures, particularly at a time when more people are taking their holidays in Britain.

In a report to the Secretary of State for Transport following the inquiry in November, the TUCC points out that the Anlaby Road curve is used by steam specials and has a potential for freight trains from the Carnaby Industrial Estate.

The TUCC points out that the financial savings made by closing curves are minimal but the consequences widespread. On several recent occasions, BR has had to bring curves closed to passenger services back into use.

The same is said for the Gascoigne Wood curve which is frequently used by diverted services between Leeds and Selby.

It was revealed at the inquiry that, in anticipation of obtaining the closure of the Anlaby Road curve, BR had already sold for development part of the large tract of land which they owned adjacent to the line although there is no road access to it.

The TUCC says the closure of these curves will cause hardship and should be refused.

West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority is planning to take delivery this month of six electric trains which Network SouthEast is giving away. The trains have only a two or three years life left in them. They will be used for commuter services between Leeds and Doncaster, thus releasing local diesel units for use on congested services in other parts of the local network.

The Ripon Railway Reinstatement Association carried out a poll in Ripon during February on the question of a rail link between Harrogate, Ripon and Northallerton at an estimated cost of £18.5 million. The association was delighted to learn that 93 per cent agreed with the plan. Members visited 2500 homes. Denis Bradbury

## London and Home Counties

Only 500 leaflets extolling the virtues of East-West CrossRail were left after RDS volunteers descended on Paddington during Rail Development Week. Our display stand attracted good interest and we took quite a bit of money in book sales. We also signed up a few new members.

A leaflet calling for improvements to the Coastway services in time for the opening of the Channel Tunnel was produced for Rail Development Week. It is available for H Trevor Jones in return for a stamped, addressed envelope, plus a 15p stamp. BR has already introduced a service from Victoria to Southampton via Hove and plan an Ashford to Brighton but only in 1994 after the electrification of Ashford - Hastings.

RDS believes Network SouthEast could, and should, do something more substantial before then. One option would be making the two services connect at Hove. It would be better for through trains from Ashford to work through to destinations further west.

Our Surrey Rail Strategy has produced some good media coverage in the county and it is hoped it will stimulate further improvements. If you would like a copy, send 35p and a foolscap stamped addressed envelope to Reg Snow (address back page).

RDS is calling for through trains from Colchester and Southend to Northampton and Coventry via the North London Line. MPs and local councils have been approached to give their support. Witham and Braintree Rail Users Association has keenly supported this initiative. A leaflet is available from H Trevor Jones in return for a stamped addressed envelope plus a 15p stamp.

The branch believes the construction of East - West CrossRail is the top priority for the area. It believes an enhanced Thameslink should be priority number two, followed by North-South CrossRail.

The Channel Tunnel Links seminar planned for

May had to be cancelled. It will now be held in late June or July. The expected speaker is BR's Theo Steel.

A members outing is to be organised for 1 September 1990. At the moment it is a choice between a tour round London or the Coastway services.

BR's London regional planning manager Richard Malins will address the branch in the autumn about the Thameslink developments. For details of any of these events, send an SAE to H Trevor Jones.

67 Guildford Park Avenue  
Guildford Surrey GU2 5NH

## South West

BR's area operations manager at Exeter, Sarah Kendall, was guest speaker at the branch's annual general meeting at Exeter. She said Devon County Council was interested in how rail could play a greater role.

Exeter had six stations within the city boundary and could benefit from more through working. Trains are already working from Exmouth to Paignton or Barnstaple, calling at Exeter's main stations.

A park and ride scheme at Crediton with extra trains running into Exeter was being discussed with the county council which would be expected to help fund it. Similar funding was being sought to increase the capacity of the Exmouth branch. The enhanced service from Crediton could well terminate at a new halt serving the out of town shopping centre being built at Digby on the Exmouth line.

Infrastructure changes on the Torbay line are being looked at, with additional trains and halts. The re-equipment of Waterloo - Exeter is being studied. It could mean electrification or a specially built diesel equivalent of the Wessex electrics. Ways of improving the service at Tiverton Parkway are also being discussed with the county council.

The branch has a new secretary: Mr Bill Eaton, 17 Thornhill Road, Mannamere, Plymouth, Devon PL3 5NF

Trevor Garrod

## North East

Preparation for electrification of the East Coast main line is concentrating minds. The new platforms at Newcastle Central are in use and work has started on removing the famous diamonds at the north end of the station.

Morpeth now has an 0710 InterCity 125 service to King's Cross, thanks to a grant from Northumberland County Council. This is believed to be the first time Northumberland has subsidised a rail service. The council has also given cash aid for a local Newcastle - Morpeth trains in the evening.

The more pro-rail Durham County Council is paying towards an improved local service to Chester-le-Street on the East Coast main line. From May, trains will serve the station in both directions approximately every two hours, with additional trains at peak times.

Durham is again giving grants for the Sunday-only passenger trains from Bishop Auckland 16 miles up the Weardale freight line to Stanhope. This year, there will be four trains to Stanhope, rather than the three of 1989.

The future of the Leamside freight-only branch from Ferryhill to Tyneside remains in doubt. Support is being sought for a feasibility study on the possibility of passenger trains running along it. The line passes through several areas of growing population in East Durham and Tyne and Wear.

Geoff Longstaffe

## East Anglia

The rail alternative to road building was put to a packed public meeting called by the Norwich Road Action Group on 9 April. The meeting was chaired by RDS member Peter Lawrence and included a video and talk by John Woods of the Light Rapid Transit Association, showing how Continental cities had turned to light rail to solve their traffic problem.

RDS branches and affiliated groups are welcome to hire this video from Mr Woods at 89 Welsford Road, Norwich NR4 6QE

RDS general secretary Trevor Garrod also addressed the meeting, describing how enhanced rail services with some new and reopened stations could enable rail to play a greater role in bringing commuters, visitors and shoppers in the city.

Trevor and Peter had a private meeting on 3 May with consultants working on the Norwich area transport study.

Trevor Garrod

## Road lobby

One of the best big-city electric tram systems in the world was removed from Los Angeles by a corporate conspiracy including General Motors, Standard Oil of California and Firestone. By purchasing property containing LA's trolley networks, closing them down, and then offering the fait accompli of a bus service, the companies changed LA for ever. The firms were convicted of conspiracy in 1949 and fined a mere £5000 each. Partly as a result of this little-known scandal, the city now has the worst smog in America. Cars are responsible for 70 per cent of the pollution.

## ENVIRONMENTAL TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION

The Environmental Transport Association is a new mass-membership organisation set up with support from the World Wide Fund for Nature. Its aims are to help people move around easily by the most environment-friendly forms of transport, and to campaign for local and central government to implement environmentally sound transport policies.

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Please tick if: ETA, 15a George Street, Glasgow, G8 7EA

\_\_\_\_\_

# PLATFORM

## Just not cricket

I heartily agree with S Allchin (Railwatch 43) about the maddening tendency to regard travel as synonymous with the car.

I recall the NatWest cricket semi-finals last August. Radio reporting alternated between the venues, Birmingham and Southampton. Commentators repeatedly said: "Let us go up (or down) the motorway."

Perhaps they should be told these cities are well linked by direct trains.

The RDS Press officer's report for 1989 said: "Queries from the Press and media are frequently dealt with."

Fine. However should not RDS shed its reticence and challenge this continual form of brainwashing by the BBC.

The National Trust produced a regional leaflet showing their properties in relation to motorways. When I pointed out the bus/train option for getting to their houses, I was told: "We hope everyone with difficulties will phone the property concerned for advice on available public transport."

Association football is a large generator of passenger revenue but club programmes seem to concentrate on giving information about road routes.

There is also a trend for impecunious Barclays League soccer clubs to re-locate. Walsall's stadium is rail served but Scunthorpe United is not. Did RDS locally lobby against a new ground impractical for rail travel?

G S Angell  
11 Franchise Street  
Kidderminster

## Freight challenge

I must disagree with Graham Nalty (Railwatch 43) when he implies that RDS is somehow choosing not to speak up on the question of Berne gauge.

I have not spoken up in support of conversion to Berne gauge because I believe such suggestions to be unproductive and even possibly counter-productive. The biggest challenge facing Rail-freight today is not Berne gauge conversion but simply staying in business.

Already the rail freight network has shrunk to Serpell-like proportions thanks to decades of unfair competition from road together with Government hostility towards BR. Converting part of this limited network to Berne gauge is not going to change the situation.

What could change it, however, is for RDS members to take up their campaigning cudgels in support of Railfreight on such issues as:

- Making section 8 grants more freely available
- Heavier taxation for heavy goods vehicles
- More stringent operating regulations for HGVs
- More investment in rolling stock and locomotives

It would also help if the freight business could be relieved of its infrastructure costs which have already led to large-scale closures of goods depots and private sidings.

I suggest that progress in these fields would transfer far more freight from road to rail than any campaign in favour of Berne gauge.

Philip Bisatt  
76 Langley Street  
Bosford  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST4 6DZ

## Unfair fare policy

The Government seems to take the view that if people find BR too expensive, they are free to use road transport.

If the resultant loss of trade hits BR too hard, then services will be withdrawn, just as a chain store closes branches and reduces its range if it falls on hard times.

But the Government seems happy to fund more road building to accommodate the increased car traffic.

Stanley Allchin  
16 Mulberry Court  
Pagham

## Shedding light on crossings

Why is it that when there is an accident at an unguarded or continental style level crossing, the public choose to blame British Rail? If the driver of a road vehicle ignores the flashing red light, the fault must lie with him.

BR trains are told to decelerate near road crossings but motorists behave like maniacs. If this were taken to its logical conclusion, motorists on main roads would be forced to slow down when approaching side roads.

Perhaps drivers would obey level crossing lights if they were made to look more like ordinary traffic lights.

D Gibbons  
1 Ravensbrook  
Morgantown  
Cardiff

## Why 5,000 people are killed every year on the roads

**Two years in jail:** A driver who killed a man when he drove at pedestrians whom he thought had hurled missiles at his car was jailed at Gloucester crown court for two years for causing death by dangerous driving. James Bain, 28, of Ashchurch, near Tewkesbury, also admitted driving with excess alcohol.

**Life in jail:** A social worker was stamped to death at his flat in Hornsey, London, when he disturbed a burglar high on crack, an Old Bailey jury heard. Paul Flint, 25, of no fixed address, was sentenced to life for the murder of John McTurk, aged 42.

**Gambling with lives:** In a Press release launching a transport safety campaign, the Department of Transport made no mention of the irresponsible habits of many car and lorry drivers. Instead, the "Department of Roads" chose to highlight a survey which showed that pedestrians sometimes cross the road after pelican crossing lights change to red. No mention was made of motorists who habitually drive through amber and red traffic lights, fail to give way to pedestrians at junctions and ignore speed limits.

**The Department of Roads:** A total of 16,500 people are employed by the Department of Transport. Only 200, a figure which includes the entire Railway Inspectorate, are responsible for railways. Last year 5,052 people died on the roads, compared to 40 on the railways.

# RDS man's book is 'banned'

A new book by RDS vice president James Towler on the fight to save the Settle & Carlisle has been banned by the National Railway Museum, it is claimed.

Publishers Platform 5 said the museum had refused to allow its shop to sell *The Battle for the Settle & Carlisle* because it was "too emotive and was written in such a way as to present one particular viewpoint".

Platform 5 director Peter Fox said: "The book is an honest and straightforward account of the events which took place. It shows neither British Rail nor the Government in good light."

But museum Press officer Julie Leydon denied the book had been banned.

"We were offered the book and declined to sell it for reasons which are commercial. We decline many things. It is the retail manager's decision."

"We will have a copy of the book in the museum library where it can be consulted freely by visitors."

Mr Towler was not surprised by the ban. He said: "I was fairly critical of civil servants in the book and it is civil servants who run the museum."

"If people want to ban it, there's probably something worth reading in it."

"I've never actually been to York museum. My interest is in the living railway."

"My fight has been to stop the Settle & Carlisle becoming a museum piece."

The book was launched at Leeds in May. It pinpoints BR's decision to re-route the Notting-

ham - Glasgow trains in 1981 as the starting point for its saga.

Mr Towler is in an ideal position to tell the tale. He was chairman of the Yorkshire Transport Users Consultative Committee until he was sacked in 1987.

He is critical of the Government-sponsored consumer watchdogs whose secretaries were seconded from BR and who "often failed to represent the views of rail users."

He shows how BR tried to deceive the public by denying it was planning to close the line and exaggerating the cost of repairing Ribbleshead viaduct.

Even when there was an overwhelming case for retention of the line, he shows how the Government still wanted to close or hive off the line until it became obvious that campaigners would use every procedural trick to keep it going.

*The Battle for the Settle and Carlisle costs £6.95 from "all good bookshops".*

A NEW prospectus of investment possibilities produced by the standing conference for the line was launched in April.

Government Minister Michael Portillo said: "Now is the time for the private sector to come forward. Let us see from modern business the same flair and imagination that the original builders displayed back in the 1870s."

"The new prospectus identifies many openings for the private sector from tours and overnight accommodation to a new steam leisure railway from Appleby to Warcop. "The line is to be the

subject of a multi-million pound investment programme and it is expected patronage will increase from half a million at present to well over one million."

"I must congratulate the Friends of the Settle - Carlisle Line, the local authorities and BR for achieving so much in the past year and I wish them every success in the future."

The prospectus is available (price £2) from the County Planning Officer, Cumbria County Council, County Office, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 4RQ

## Twilight zone

From page one

service because Network SouthEast cannot afford the capital investment.

Many station car park schemes have also been deferred by NSE because of cash shortages.

There has been an outcry by women over BR plans to leave more city and suburban stations without staff - to save money. The tragedy is that most women will not complain, they will quietly seek out a more user-friendly way to travel even if it is more expensive.

Provincial has tried to save puny amounts of cash by not stopping at some of the rural stations which attract few customers in off-peak hours.

Major General Lennox Napier of the Central Transport Consultative Committee called on the Government and BR to reassess its financial objectives in the light of deteriorating economic circumstances. He said: "British Rail managers are having to cobble together a service because they do not have the tools to do the job."

His committee said: "British Rail is in trouble. Promised improvements have been far too slow in coming, and now some vital investment schemes to bring about those improvements are indefinitely delayed."

BR can be criticised but it is the Government which has the responsibility to take an overview of the transport scene.

Only three pence of every £1 investment in the railways is met by the Government. NUR official Andy Dodds told a transport conference in Newcastle in March.

**Bright spark:** Secretary of State Cecil Parkinson launched the £22 million electrification of Portsmouth - Southampton and Portsmouth - Eastleigh in May. The scheme includes a new station at Hedge End. While the Government has been going out of its way to cut BR grants, Mr Parkinson praised Eastleigh borough council for helping BR with a "large contribution".

## On your bike - and train

Buses have started to move in where BR is reluctant to go. Several Scottish bus companies have started to accommodate cyclists who have been getting ever more confused by the obstacle course BR has laid for them.

The London Cycling Campaign advised its members that if they wanted to be depressed they should read the new issue of BR's Guide to Biking by Train. The campaign warned that the type of peak hour ban associated with London is now spreading to other cities such as Cardiff, Newcastle and Leeds.

Other countries seem to recognise that trains and bikes go together. In Berlin, the U-bahn and S-bahn carry signs on trains to show people where to load cycles and prams. On Basel's LRT system, there are hooks for eight bikes to be carried inside the cars as well as covered bike parking at stops.

RDS has raised the issue frequently with BR

management and politicians in recent years. We produced a report in 1987, jointly with the Cyclists' Touring Club and Friends of the Earth.

BR's problem is that, to win prompt approval for investment from the Department of Transport, it feels it has to restrict luggage and toilet facilities, particularly in Sprinters.

Some people in management are now prepared to allow four, rather than two bikes, per Sprinter. That's better but RDS wants adequate luggage space on all trains. BR's £3 fee might be reasonable for a long journey but on local journeys a bike ought to go free.

BR also has a problem with bike parking at stations. At Reading, it has spent many millions on redeveloping the station but has ignored the advice of the local cycle campaign and failed to fit good (Sheffield-style) racks. BR Western Region is reportedly a bete noire among cycling groups.

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The need for a London transport authority: A conference on urban transport in London and the South East takes place on 21 June 1990 at the Cathedral Conference Centre in Victoria, London. 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, Lancs PR1 9RB.