

Away for the Day

What the papers say



Even railway staff cannot get trains for Awaydays now because BR managers say they have no spare rolling stock. So sadly this year the British Rail Sports and Social Club at Selby, Yorkshire, was just one of many organisations which was forced to use a road coach for its awayday to Bridlington. Corbyrail campaigners ARTHUR and ELISABETH JORDAN have been intrigued by the long history of the rail Awayday. Here they explain how 12 years of research was fulfilled with the publication of their new book *Away for the Day*.

It is 150 years since Thomas Cook ran his first railway excursion — but that was by no means the first such trip. Open wagons carrying day trippers appeared only a short time after the birth of the railways.

Their impact was dramatic, not least on seaside resorts where “keep Sunday sacred” campaigners opposed them — while shopkeepers welcomed them with open arms.

Our book takes the reader outside the railway station to see what the trippers did when they reached their destinations.

What appears in our book is only a small part of

the vast amount of material we gathered. Over 12 years we have visited libraries, record offices and museums, as well as researching newspaper files, society records and private archives from Bournemouth to Glasgow and from Norwich to Swansea.

One old newspaper describes how a shopkeeper was fined after he opened up to sell provisions to hundreds of people who arrived by train only to find nothing in town open.

We also describe trip weeks and wakes weeks which were perfectly built round the railway's ability to carry large numbers of people quickly and cheaply.

Political events, miners' galas, cup finals, mystery tours, seaside illuminations, theatre trips, papal visits, international exhibitions and works outings all helped to swell the railway receipts.

With 150 illustrations and 90,000 words, Away for the Day is published by Silver Link at £19.95. Signed copies are available post free from us. Send crossed cheques or postal orders to A & E Jordan at Little Close, 13 Arnhill Road, Gretton, Corby, Northants NN7 3DN. Tel: 0536 770478.

Cars and credibility



TREVOR GARROD'S VIEW

A member recently wrote to me saying he would not be renewing his subscription to RDS unless the society is “prepared to declare war on the private car and its ilk”. He accused some members of hypocrisy in extolling the use of the private car while purporting to support public transport.

I replied that I personally do not run a car. I did ride a motorcycle for 11 years, but since giving it up, have not felt particularly deprived. If, however, I lived in the country, miles from a station, then I would be tempted to buy a car, even if I had difficulty in affording one.

A survey of RDS members showed that almost exactly 50 per cent owned a car or had access to one. That means our members probably rely on cars less than the adult population as a whole.

Certainly public transport advocates who travel by car where there is a feasible alternative have little credibility.

But I am grateful to several RDS members who have on occasions over the years, given me lifts to places or events that would have been difficult or impossible to reach in any other way. RDS has always held that the key issue is car usage rather

than ownership. That is why we have argued for taxation changes to encourage people to use their private vehicles more rationally and to show up the true costs to the community of motoring. It is also why we have supported park-and-ride schemes at stations. It often makes sense to drive to your nearest station and continue by rail, rather than to drive all the way.

Many other things can be done to reduce our dependence on the polluting road vehicle. Attractive light rapid transit in cities is one way. Development of electric cars for some short distance journeys could be another. RDS argues for such measures.

A year ago, when I set out some of our ideas in a magazine and also said I did not own a car, the editor received a hysterical response from a reader accusing me of being a fanatic, holier than thou and all sorts of other terrible things. If our policies are criticised on both sides, that suggests to me that we may have achieved the right balance.

TREVOR GARROD is general secretary of RDS and also writes a column every four weeks in the magazine Rail.

Juggernauts are to be driven from thousands of miles of Britain's roads. Instead the train will take the strain.

Daily Mail 9.5.91

“You have to be practical about free competition,” warned Erik Vandenbroele, secretary general of the Community of European Railways. “If you have one track and one station, you can only have one train there at 8 am.”

International Freight Weekly 1.7.91

Towns for too long have been arranged for the convenience of car drivers. *Modern Tramway 4.91*

In London the traffic congestion is caused by the 15 per cent of commuters who choose to drive to work. The rest travel mostly by train. Surveys have shown that two-thirds of cars in central London are subsidised by companies.

New Scientist 3.91

Many are rightly critical of the inability of US governments to grasp the nettle of gun control; the British record on car control seems every bit as lamentable, and the consequences as damaging. *Letter in Financial Times 31.5.91*

Construction started on 140 miles of motorways and trunk roads in 1990/1, according to Roads Minister Christopher Chope.

Financial Times 22.5.91

Railway construction is a lost art in Britain. No main line has been built since 1906.

Financial Times 18.5.91

When in full command of herself, Mrs Thatcher was adamantly prejudiced against British Rail and against rail travel in general. It was always a barmy basis for a policy but it was one which numerous ministers, although knowing it to be barmy, chose to comply with rather than overturn.

Hugo Young in The Guardian 30.5.91

The lorry pays only 15 per cent of the costs it imposes on society in the shape of noise, air pollution, accidents and road construction expenses, according to the Forecasting and Environmental Policy Institute in Heidelberg. It also receives a 25 per cent subsidy through its ability to exceed speed limits, overload and dodge working hours regulations. *The Guardian 31.5.91*

Perhaps BR and the private sector should look at how the Australians and New Zealanders deal with containers in remote railyards. They use lorries fitted with special attachments called sidelifters. These can lift their own containers on or off rail wagons without needing any other equipment. They are cheap and can lift containers from other lorries, too, so only one is required per train. *Letter to Daily Telegraph 31.5.91*

Enough of often useless white, yellow, and now red lines, let us once again see some British tramlines. *Letter in Modern Tramway 7.91*

Unfortunately BR management does not seem to have the necessary radical vision.

Letter in The Guardian 18.5.91

BR is facing a shortfall of nearly £500 million for its huge investment programme despite the Government decision to increase funding this year by more than a third to £1.5 billion.

The Guardian 20.6.91

Many previous recipients of grants to develop rail freight are angry that their facilities were developed for Speedlink which is being scrapped.

The Engineer 6.6.91

Mrs Thatcher's former economic adviser Sir Alan Walters wanted the Government to embark on another Beeching-style cutback of the railway network in the 1980s. *Daily Telegraph 13.5.91*

UK road haulage costs need to rise by up to 20 per cent, relative to rail, before large volumes of domestic freight will switch from road to rail, according to a survey of road hauliers.

International Freight Weekly 5.8.91