

# LOCAL ACTION

## Lincolnshire

**SAVED:** The Barnetby - Gainsborough closure proposal has been withdrawn according to an announcement by Regional Railways in July. The history of this threat to the line goes back nearly three years to the time when BR was instructed by the Government to select three lines, close them and lay on substitute buses. Even though the present service is sparse and offers timings which are virtually useless for local needs, this test case for Bustritution was bitterly opposed.

The future of the route now looks healthier with talks between Regional Railways, and Lincolnshire and Humberside county councils on the subject of funding an improved service. Class 153 units may become available early in 1992. RDS and the fledgling but very active Brigg and Gainsborough Rail Development Group will be pressing for an improved service from May next year.

The group publicised the line and its efforts were rewarded by an increase in passengers, eroded unfortunately by fare increases and BR's use of unreliable stock. This summer the group distributed 10,000 copies of a new leaflet promoting the line and it has been promised stock for an excursion train. If you would like to help with this campaign, contact Phil Hewson, 1b Bigby High Road, Brigg, South Humberside DN20 9HB. Services on this route and on the Doncaster - Lincoln line will be disrupted by the closure and rebuilding of 142-year-old Gainsborough Trent Bridge in anticipation of increased volumes of imported coal going to Trent Valley power stations.

**STRATEGY:** Our new pamphlet, South Humber-side — A Rail Strategy Document for the 90s, spells out how to improve operations for both freight and passengers. Well researched and detailed, it is being distributed to councillors, chambers of trade and commerce, environmental groups and local voluntary organisations. It is already receiving favourable Press coverage. Copies are available from Mike Savage, 60 Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes DN38 for 50p, post free.

**CHARTER RAIL:** The branch has helped Crowle Community Hall Support Group to sponsor a series of Supersprinter scenic cruises from South Humberside following a change of heart from Regional Railways North East whose predecessors at York had earlier turned down all requests for charters.

**RAILPORT:** The branch is planning a seminar in October or November to promote Doncaster Railport, the Channel Tunnel freight depot being built for Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. Initially it will be the nearest intermodal yard for Lincolnshire and South Humberside.

**JOIN UP:** Chairman Brian Hastings has urged everyone to recruit a new member this year. Promotional literature can be obtained from him at 312 Wharf Road, Ealand, Scunthorpe DN17 4JW. Paul Jowett is also helping to foster good relationships with other environmental groups and with user groups on the fringe of our area.

*Brian Hastings*

## North West

**LIGHT RELIEF:** The last train from Manchester Victoria to Bury left on 13 July, before the line closed between Victoria and Crumpsall. The complete shutdown of the line was programmed for 16 August. When it reopens before the end of the year, it will be as the first Metrolink light rail into Manchester. This will be followed shortly after by the Altrincham line. Announcements on future phases remain noticeable by their absence, although parliamentary powers have been applied for lines to Trafford Park/Salford Quays, East Didsbury and the Oldham loop.

**SLEEPY SAVERS:** North West MPs are unhappy with InterCity's plans to withdraw the Manchester and Liverpool sleeper service to London Euston as from the winter timetable. They are lobbying InterCity and the branch has given them support. We have written to BR managers to point out that the service would perform better financially if it were marketed properly and targeted at the

business community. The Saver fare plus sleeper supplement is cheaper than the standard fare payable for peak time departures.

**TRIPPING OUT:** The branch is preparing itself for a BR closure proposal for the line between Frodsham and Halton junctions. This line could help to provide a useful service between Liverpool Lime Street, Chester and the North Wales coast, particularly if Liverpool airport grows in size and importance. The line was recently singled and is only signalled for northbound trains. Just one service currently uses it, the summer Saturday 1610 Llandudno - Liverpool. Outward travel from Liverpool requires two changes, or one change and a very circuitous route, hardly encouraging day trippers or holidaymakers. The North Cheshire Rail Users Group, affiliated to RDS, is preparing to fight this closure proposal and has the support of Cheshire County Council. Members are urged to contact Andrew Barden, 5 Penrith Close, Frodsham WA6 7ND to find how they can help.

*Robert Cummings*

## Severnside

**SECOND SEVERN:** The branch has submitted a petition to the Lords calling for the planned second Severn road bridge to incorporate a rail line.

**REVIEW:** BR has started a thorough review of stopping services between Newport and Bristol following recent highlighting in the railway press of the campaign for an improved service at Pilning (currently down to one train each way on Monday to Saturday).

*Graham Larkbey*

## North East

**GUEST:** A wide range of international, national and local issues were dealt with by area manager Chris Dickenson when he came as guest speaker to our well-attended June meeting. Investment, fares, freight potential and east coast main line electrification were among the topics he was questioned on.

**LEAMSIDE:** The branch's immediate concern remains the future of the now-closed Leamside line. Durham County Council has persuaded BR to leave the track in situ while a feasibility study is undertaken into prospects for possible freight and passenger developments. RDS will co-operate.

**ELECTRIC:** The branch is also now promoting both the idea of electrification of the busy Sunderland - Newcastle - Hexham commuter line and the linking of Middlesbrough into the Regional Railways Express network.

*Geoff Longstaff*

## East Anglia

**REOPEN NOW:** The reopening of the Cambridge - St Ives line and additional stations in the Cambridge area are called for in a draft report by Buchanan Associates, the latest study into Cambridge's traffic problems commissioned by the city council. The report describes the county council's light rail proposals for the city as too expensive.

**WRONG SUN:** A section of the M11 was closed in June because the tarmac was melting in the hot weather. A case of the wrong type of sun.

**FERRET FIRST:** The branch had a sales stand at the Cottenham gun fair. Ian Carter brought his model railway which attracted people to our stand where we were able to give out many leaflets. We were also able to sell a large number of raffle tickets despite the competition from other groups including the Ferret Racing Association. It was a strange feeling putting our views across when most of the audience had shotguns.

*Nick Dibben*

**FOXY BUSINESS:** Roads in Suffolk's county town of Ipswich are congested for about 10 hours a week, that is, in the peaks. The rest of the time, traffic moves quite well, nearly twice as fast as in Norwich or London. But local councils are being advised to spend £120 million of public money on new roads in and around the town. The advice

comes in a report called Moving Around in Towns by consultants Halcrow Fox who dismiss, in one sentence, any role for rail. These assumptions were publicly questioned by branch committee member Charles Taylor at a presentation by Halcrow Fox and RDS has submitted detailed comments on the report. We point out that Ipswich has rail links from four directions which already bring in workers and shoppers and would bring in more if additional stations were opened. Doubling and electrification of the Ipswich - Felixstowe line would also enable more passengers to be attracted to rail.

**STATION FIRST:** Redevelopment of Lowestoft station as shops, offices and a hotel is suggested in the Lowestoft and North Waveney local plan. Waveney district council wants to relocate the station to the west in order to build a new road across the existing platforms. In our reply to the plan, we question the need for the new road and suggest that the station be retained as part of the development - and as a station. If the new road is built, any new station must be prominent, with a bus interchange together with full passenger and parcels facilities. Survey work is also in progress on a spine road which would cross the line just over a mile west of the station. We suggest an additional halt there, with parking facilities.

*Trevor Garrod*

## Scotland

**DORNOCH DISGRACE:** The new Dornoch Firth bridge was officially opened in August - without any facility for trains. A few days before the opening, a group of cyclists were planning to shame the Scottish Office and ScotRail into getting their act together and building a rail crossing. The cyclists were planning to travel south by train to Golspie, where they would get off and cycle over the new bridge as the train went on its 19th century time warp. The cyclists were expecting to rejoin the same train at Tain.

**MILLIONS WASTED:** With a fraction of the £450 million being spent on building the M74, ScotRail could transform conditions for rail travellers throughout Scotland.

**ROAD RUNNERS:** Many local authorities have adopted the environmental charter prepared by Friends of the Earth (Scotland) which calls for car restraint and improvements to public transport. Some have drawn up their own charters and many are extremely supportive of improvements to rail transport. Apart from Lothian Region and Edinburgh District, which have a long tradition of opposing new roads in Edinburgh, although supporting them outside the city, there is very little recognition that real concern for the environment means a drastic cut in road building with money switched to improving rail services. Many local authorities continue to call for, and in the case of the regions plan to build yet more roads oblivious of the damage to the environment. Dundee district council, while approving the charter, still refuses to safeguard a vital bus/rail interchange at Dundee rail station.

*Douglas Smart*

## Wessex

Congratulations to our member Peter Madsen on being elected deputy mayor of Eastleigh. Peter is a former secretary of the branch and a district councillor of several years standing. He is expected to become mayor in 1992.

*Trevor Garrod*

## North Midlands

**HAVE YOUR SAY:** A rail development plan for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire is being prepared. Local businesses and councils are being invited to show how services can be improved. Reopening old lines and building new routes will also be covered. Input is welcomed from RDS members. Send suggestions to Graham Nalty, Chairman, North Midlands, 6 Mill Close, Borrowwash, Derby DE7 3GU (Phone Derby 67499).