

RIS

Railway Invigoration Society

for the retention and modernisation of railway services

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P R O G R E S S R E P O R T

No. 93

DECEMBER 1972

THE "BLUE BOOK" LEAK - ACCIDENT OR DESIGN ?

✓✗ The recent disclosure by the Sunday Times of the contents of the "Blue Book", a confidential report prepared by the Department of the Environment advocating the closure of some 40 per cent of the railway system understandably caused a public outcry. Although this was by no means the first suggestion that some very extreme anti-railway views are held in certain official circles - for instance, The Times has referred to Department of the Environment proposals to virtually eliminate the entire railway system by 1980 - this latest leak has laid bare not only details of what would happen if such a plan were put into effect but how pathetically weak are the arguments advanced in its favour.

Indeed, the sole justification for the measures described in the "Blue Book" appears to rest on a net annual saving of only £9 million, after social costs have been deducted. This is a sum so small compared to the total finances of Britain's railways that it can hardly be regarded as significant, especially as the cost-benefit calculations used are, by their very nature, far from being exact. To produce this saving, the travelling public in all parts of Britain would be subjected to severe hardship on a scale far in excess of that caused by the Beeching cuts. As the plan coolly admits, a direct consequence would be an annual increase of 500 in the number of serious road accidents.

Whoever the authors of this plan are, they must know full well that no government wishing to remain in office would openly put it into operation. What is more likely is that a compromise plan will eventually be announced whereby the public will be asked to accept some closures in return for a new financial deal for the rest of the system. This is where the real danger lies. It is now widely recognised that the system has already been contracted to a critical point beyond which further closures would so weaken the competitive position of the remaining routes as to lead to a serious worsening of British Rail's total finances. In a few years after another Beeching-type exercise, there would be demands for yet more cuts which would lead to a point where the extremists would eventually have their way.

The effect of the leak of the extreme proposals in the "Blue Book", however, could well be to soften public criticism of any compromise plan, even though this might still contain much that would be unpalatable. Therefore, it is tempting to suggest that the leak might well

have been a deliberate act on the part of someone in the Department of the Environment with the specific object of reducing reaction to the official plan when it is publicly announced. Irrespective of whether this idea is true or false, any more closures must be regarded as not just local issues but at a threat to the very existence of railways in Britain. X

POET LAUREATE AS VICE-PRESIDENT

We heartily congratulate Sir John Betjeman on being made Poet Laureate. We are indeed honoured in having such a distinguished person as one of our vice-presidents. But Sir John is not only an outstanding man of letters: he is also, of course, a doughty champion of railways.

ANOTHER ACHIEVEMENT!

✓X After a long campaign by the Romford-Upminster Railway Users' Association, with which this Society has been closely associated, the Secretary of State for the Environment has refused consent to the closure of this line. For the past two years, the Association has pursued a vigorous campaign in conjunction with British Rail to publicise the facilities offered by this railway. This Society has long advocated action of this kind on all grant-aided lines and here we have positive results to show what can be achieved. (see also p. 7) X

SOS (SAVE OUR SERVICES) CAMPAIGN

✓X At a delegate conference held on 21st September at the Caxton Hall, London, attended by representatives of about 40 organizations, the following resolution was carried :-

"This meeting, representing the organizations listed below, calls on the Government to stop further rail closures, both passenger and freight, because of the mounting threat to the quality of life of increasing road traffic and also because previous closures have in fact failed to benefit British Rail finances. It further urges the Government to renew forthwith all present grant for unremunerative but socially necessary lines and services for at least three years, and to extend the future grant period to a minimum of five years, which alone will enable British Rail to operate and effect the necessary improvements in these services in conditions of stability and not under threat of withdrawal of grant at short notice. It also urges the Government to separate major capital expenditures on these lines from annual grant costs and to pay such expenditure as infra-structure grants as and when needed."

The resolution was forwarded to the Department of the Environment and a copy sent, with a covering letter, to 200 MPs. An unsatisfactory reply has been received from the Department.

Another meeting, open to all, will be held at Caxton Hall on Tuesday 5th December at 6.45 p.m. The object of this is to press for the renewal of all grants for the coming year and for longer periods. Further particulars are obtainable from Mr. R. V. Banks, of 121, Ashford Road, Bearsted, Maidstone, Kent. (telephone: Maidstone 37579) X

NEW CORPORATE MEMBERS

We welcome the following local authorities to corporate membership of the Society :-
The London Borough of Hackney, the urban districts of Deane (West Riding of Yorkshire)
Knutsford (Cheshire), Sowerby Bridge (West Riding) and the rural districts of East Retford (Notts)
Haverfordwest (Pembrokeshire) and Hemsworth (West Riding)

IN PARLIAMENT

Selections from the official reports

House of Commons

Questions and answers (all written)

SSE = Secretary of State for the Environment

9th August Freight Mr. David Clark (Colne Valley) asked the SSE what is his estimate of the amount of freight carried by road and rail in 1971; and what were the comparable figures 5 and 10 years previously, respectively. Mr. Peyton Following is the information :-

	m i l l i o n t o n s		
	1961	1966	1971
Road	1,240	1,615	1,710
Rail	238	214	196

17th October Railway network. Mr. Elystan Morgan (Cardiganshire) asked the SSE if he will make a statement concerning the plan for a reduced railway network recently prepared by his Department. Mr. Peyton The document to which the Sunday Times drew attention on 8 October is merely one of a series of studies undertaken by officials in my Department and by British Rail themselves. This process which is not yet complete is made necessary by the financial position of the Board. Future policy will not be decided before there has been the most careful consideration of the alternatives and costs attaching to each. Meanwhile I am sure that the House will wish to avoid premature conclusions about the results of these studies and will have in mind the grants and loans already made by the Government to the Railways:- £110 million in 1971 and an estimated £160 million in 1972. These figures include for the first time grants for 75% of the cost of new rolling stock and signalling in urban areas. I regret very much that this confidential working document should have been disclosed and that its publication out of context should have given rise to widespread and unnecessary anxiety. X

Rail services (subsidies) Mr. Elystan Morgan asked the SSE what changes have been made in the policy of Her Majesty's Government on the question of subsidies to loss-making railway lines on account of their social or economic significance. Mr. Peyton None.

Rail services (Wales) Mr. Elystan Morgan asked the SSE if he will give an assurance that no final decisions will be taken concerning the future of any rail passenger or freight services in Wales until the transport survey which has been commissioned by the Welsh Economic Council has been completed. Mr. Peyton I will, of course, take into account all representations made to me by the Welsh Council.

Transport Survey Mr. Elystan Morgan asked the Secretary of State for Wales when he expects the Welsh Council's survey of trains in Wales to be completed. Mr. P. Thomas The research project is due to be completed in 1975, but interim reports will be made to the Council from time to time.

18th October Railways (West Country services) Mr. David Owen (Plymouth, Sutton) asked the SSE if he will give an assurance that he will not allow a programme of rail closures which will denude Cornwall of all rail service and will ensure that Plymouth is the terminal station in the South-West. Mr. Peter Walker There is no such programme.

Mr. David Owen asked the SSE if he will give an assurance that he will refuse to reduce the efficiency of the fast inter-city service from Paddington to Plymouth by allowing closure of the Newbury-Westbury line and diverting trains around Bristol. Mr. Peyton No such proposal has been made.

20th October Railway services (Derby) Mr. Whitehead (Derby, North) asked the SSE if he will give an assurance that he will not authorise a programme of rail closures cutting Derby off from passenger service connections with Crewe and the West Midlands and the Derbyshire administrative centre of Matlock, respectively. Mr. Peyton No such programme has been proposed.

Cardiff-Treherbert railway line Mr. Alec Jones (Rhondda, West) asked the SSE if he will give an assurance that he will not agree to the closure of the Cardiff-Treherbert railway line. Mr. Peyton No such proposal has been made.

24th October Railways (grants) Mr. Hicks (Bodmin) asked the SSE if he will give details of the routes operated by British Rail in Cornwall which are in receipt of grant aid, the financial amount payable for each route and the terminal date when the current subsidy ceases.

Mr. Peyton Grants are being made as follows :-

service	£000
Plymouth-Liskeard- Penzance	357
Plymouth-Gunnislake	122
St. Erth-St. Ives	44
Liskeard-Looe	60
Truro-Falmouth	112
Bodmin Road-Newquay	173

Further payments will be made in 1973, when the question of renewing the grants will be considered in good time before they are due to expire (31st December)

Mr. Alec Jones (Rhondda, West) asked the SSE what was the total amount of grant paid under section 39 (1) of the Transport Act, 1968, for Welsh rail services in 1971

Mr. Peyton Approximately £5.1 million.

Railways (South Wales) Mr. Rowlands (Merthyr Tydfil) asked the SSE whether he will give an assurance that he will not consider approving the closure of the Cardiff/Merthyr and other South Wales valley passenger services. Mr. Peyton No such proposal has been made.

25th October Rail service (London-Hastings) Mr. Warren (Hastings) asked the SSE if he will give an assurance that, having approved a town expansion scheme for Hastings, he has no intention of advising British Rail to curtail the direct rail links between Hastings and London during the period of the town expansion programme. Mr. Eyre My right Hon. Friend has no such intention.

Tyneside rapid transit plan Mr. Blenkinsop (South Shields) asked the SSE whether he has completed his consideration of the Tyneside rapid transit plan; and whether he will make a statement, in view of the importance of these proposals for the development of Tyneside.

Mr. Eyre Tyneside Passenger Transport have applied for grant towards the cost of this scheme. My right hon. Friend has promised a decision by the end of this year.

26th October Rail services (East Suffolk) Mr. Stainton (Sudbury and Woodbridge) asked the SSE whether he is in a position to announce the basis on which grant aiding to British Railways in respect of the East Suffolk line will be continued, in view of the fact that the present arrangements are due to expire at the end of the year. Mr. Peyton I have no plans to change the basis on which grants for loss-making rail services are made.

Debates

20th October British Rail (lifting-barrier level crossings) (An adjournment debate initiated by Mr. Toby Jessel (Twickenham). The debate, which concerned British Rail's proposal to alter barrier arrangements at two level crossings - Hampton and Strawberry Hill stations - and the consequent danger to children, was replied to by Mr. Reginald Eyre, a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Environment - see cols. 745-53 of the House of Commons "Hansard")

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The editor will consider for publication letters on matters of general interest to members. Any opinions expressed, however, must not be taken as necessarily reflecting the official views and policies of the Society. The editor reserves the right to make "cuts". Letters should normally be signed by writer's real names. Only in exceptional circumstances, which must be clearly stated in a covering note, will a letter be accepted for publication under a nom de plume.

Why not a Road Conversion League ?

We read from time to time of a body called the Railway Conversion League, which, by a result of either rail-phobia or a morbid attraction to road transport, places itself in diametric opposition to the aims of the Railway Invigoration Society.

It is time, sir, that we moved into the realms of a Road Conversion League, that is, a "pan-tracked transport" group.

Firstly, we must not be too particular about one standard gauge; perhaps three would be best. Mr. Calvert, in his excellent book "The future of Britain's railways", points the way set by a West German professor of transport who suggested converting motorways to broad-gauge, car-carrying, railways.

Intra-city transport is already moving back towards trams - the bus-only lanes in city streets are essentially the same. Again, Mr. Calvert's book shows that the tram network that formerly existed in Glasgow was used to make door-to-door and shop goods deliveries; it could presumably do so again. An integrated and dense network of tracked transport systems between and within cities would enable cars and lorries to be dispensed with almost entirely, bringing massive benefits to the environment and freeing a large sector of the economy for production

of goods and services better calculated to improve the lot of the nation's inhabitants.

This leaves the rural areas to be served. Before the first world war, there were many schemes afoot for light narrow gauge railways to be built, to connect with main line railways. Assuming there had been no disruption of the economy, such as the Great War, and that Henry Ford had desisted from introducing mass-produced decivilisation, we might today have had an adequate system of public transport with tramways of a sort linking all the larger villages and small towns.

To introduce this today, we could start by re-opening most rural lines closed since 1950 and by laying narrow gauge tracks at, say, 60 cm gauge. This would have the advantages that it would involve less capital expenditure, especially in replacing earthworks and bridges, and could operate with smaller units, better suited to rural conditions. After all, nobody would buy or operate a furniture removal lorry when a light van was all that was necessary: by comparison, rural railways have formerly been excessively costly due to operating in too grandiose a way and this applies just as much to the stumps of "basic railway" routes still existing.

It would be poetic justice if rural roads were "rationalised" and some converted to tramways. Better still, we could start by allowing roads to fall into disrepair, so that motorists' organisations would be put on the defensive by making claims of capital starvation, running down and motorists being forced off the roads.

The capitalisation of the nation's future transport requirements can come from either the State or private groups. The only important point is that the State should ensure that the same yardstick of investment applies to both tracked and non-tracked systems after allowances have been made for social costs. If finances were raised privately, then this would apply just as much to new roads, on which tolls and a pollution tax would have to be paid. But, as the State has accepted obligation to provide certain fundamental services, like health, education and water supplies, it seems strange that no public transport system is yet provided out of general taxation, particularly as transport is an essential service (and yet the young and infirm are not able to drive their own cars, on which the Department of the Environment and the Railway Conversion League would perhaps like to see us totally dependent).

A tracked transport route system of twice or three times the present size is a certainty in Britain, so long as we retain our present scale of population, industry and living standards. The question is not one of whether the need is seen, but when. It should be the role of the Railway Invigoration Society and all similar groups to press this fundamental point, preferably combining their resources to do so.

David Fennell

(Vice-Chairman, Plymouth Polytechnic Railway
Appreciation Society)

48, Belgrave Road, Plymouth, Devon.

REPORTS FROM BRANCHES AND AREAS

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties

The annual general meeting of this Branch was held on 13th September. The Chairman reviewed the year's activities, of which the most successful had been a joint meeting with Railway Development Association on the subject of the Channel Tunnel.

The Branch Chairman and Secretary were both re-elected and the new committee consists of six members altogether.

The future programme was discussed and, as a result, the committee will study a request to arrange a visit in the school holidays. Members also requested that the Branch should follow the example of others and publish its own newsletter to inform members of meetings and to bridge the gap between progress reports. (The first issue of this newsletter has been published and congratulations are extended to all concerned with its production. The newsletter editor is Mr. P. E. Cogar, Room S2, Scott Lidgett House, Decima Street, London, SE1 40S. Ed.)

A talk has been arranged for Tuesday, 6th February, 1973. This will be given by Mr. J. Ogilvie. He will speak about his "Keyhole plan", a proposal to obviate the need for certain Southern Region termini by running through services. The venue is the Tudor Room (capacity 100 people) at Caxton Hall, Westminster, London, S. W. 1.

✓✗ It was with regret that it was learned that the Secretary of State has consented to the closure of the Bletchley-Bedford line from a date which has yet to be announced. It had been hoped that this line, being on the edge of the London commuter area and adjacent to the new city development of Milton Keynes, might have received more lenient treatment from the Secretary of State. ✗

✓✗ On a happier note, we are very pleased to report that the Secretary of State has refused consent to the closure of the 3¼ mile Romford-Upminster line. The Society's National Chairman, Dr. Caton, is chairman of the local users' group which has been campaigning for the retention of this line. In his latter role, he was interviewed by Radio London on the day that the decision was announced. This is the second occasion on which a refusal to close this line has been made, the previous time being in 1965. In its report on the line, the Department of the Environment states that earnings have increased substantially since 1970 and there appears to be scope for a further substantial increase. The Department suggests that one way of reducing costs would be to substitute a two-car train for the three-car diesel unit which is used at present. ✗

✓✗ We are also pleased to announce that the Secretary of State for the Environment has refused consent to the withdrawal of the Watford Junction-Croxley Green passenger service.

Before agreeing to making a grant for the Epping-Ongar line, the Department of the Environment has requested London Transport to reduce operating costs. This could only be achieved by removing the passing loop at North Weald and hence reducing the peak-hour

service frequency from 20 to 35 minutes. ✕

In response to public demand, the Brighton to Exeter through passenger service is to continue running on Saturdays throughout the winter. Other improvements on the Southern Region include the provision of an increased service to Feltham, connecting with the London Heathrow rail-air link buses. Included in increased services planned to commence in May next year are those from London to the Medway towns and to Brighton.

✓✕ The Institute of Contemporary Arts (ICA) has set up a Transport Action Link with the title "All-change" and the object of providing a clearing-house for the exchange of transport information. The headquarters of the Institute are at Nash House, 12, Carlton House Terrace, London. S.W.1. ✕

East Anglian

✓✕ This Branch held a public meeting in Ipswich on 7th October. Those present included members of the Ipswich Society, the Suffolk Preservation Society and the Ipswich Action Group. Mr. M. Muncie, Norwich Divisional Commercial Manager of British Rail, spoke on their future plans. Freight and parcels traffic had increased over the last year and negotiations were in progress with more prospective customers. The Division's inter-city trains were to be speeded up and on the pay-train fares structure reorganised. There was need to increase earnings on local lines, so that smaller grants would be required. An example of increased earnings was on the East Suffolk line, where a new railhead for roadstone had been opened at Melton. A company siding had also been relaid at Fulbourn, near Cambridge. ✕

The secretary of the Branch has had letters published in the local press concerning container traffic on the roads and the drastic cuts plan leaked on 8th October.

✓✕ On 10th October, a Lowestoft Branch of the East Suffolk Travellers' Association was formed. The Felixstowe Branch of this Association - formed some months ago - has already had some success: intermediate stations on the Ipswich-Felixstowe line are now served by all trains as a result of their pressure.

It is understood that there has been an increase in the number of passengers on the Ipswich-Cambridge route, following the efforts of the Newmarket and District Rail Travellers' Association.

Three Counties

✓✕ We are delighted that this Branch - covering Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire - has recently been revived. When originally formed in 1964, this was the Society's first branch.

An important matter, which probably helped tremendously to bring about the resurrection of this Branch, has been the widespread concern over the future of the controversial Cheltenham to Stratford-upon-Avon line (ex-GWR). This was again scheduled for closure (on 31st December as recently as September. But in a letter dated 25th October, Mr. Reginald Eyre, a Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Department of the Environment, said that he understood that British Rail was not now proposing to remove all freight services from this line next year.

Opposition - including an approach to the Economic Planning Council for the South West - continues to the proposed closure of Stonehouse (Burdett Road) station. ✕

③ A six-mile section of the Thornbury (Glos.) branch - closed to passengers from 19th June, 1944, and later to freight - has been relaid to provide a connection between the Amalgamated Roadstone Corporation limestone quarry at Tytherington and the Bristol-Birmingham line at Yat

British Rail's plan to build a new station a mile from the city centre at Gloucester to replace the present Central and Eastgate stations has been scrapped. Instead, operations are to be concentrated on a modernised Central station and Eastgate is to be closed. Among British Rail's reasons for this change of plan are Central's better situation in relation to the bus station and the main shopping and business area and the possibility of eliminating five level crossings on the line between Tuffley Junction and Eastgate station.

AREAS

North-Eastern England

✕ Our correspondent in the North-East reports :-

✕ The inquiry into the proposal to close Riverside branch of the North Tyneside line took place on 28th September. Mr. R. K. Mains objected on behalf of both the Railway Invigoration Society and the National Council on Inland Transport. The only other oral objection was presented by Newcastle and District Trades Council. Altogether there were only ten objectors, although one included a petition with over 400 signatures. It is unfortunate that, unlike the previous time closure of this line was proposed, no local authority lodged an objection. ✕

✕ Regrettably, certain local councillors are tending to attack the Tyneside Passenger Executive's plans for a rapid transit rail system. Objections in Newcastle are based mainly on the cost of the system. In Jarrow and Hebburn there is a feeling that South Tyneside is intended to be a poor relation to the north side of the river, while in South Shields there is much concern about the property which would have to be demolished to allow for re-routing of the existing railway line. However, in a letter to the local press, Dr. Ridley, Director-General of the Passenger Transport Executive, states that the only properties concerned are eight houses and four shops. ✕ Faced with these doubts, the Tyneside Passenger Transport Authority has urged Mr. Peyton (Minister for Transport Industries) to give early approval to the £65 million plan. Ominously, the PTA has said that, if approval is not given, the only alternative that it can foresee is the complete withdrawal of Tyneside's present rail services and their replacement by buses. At the same time, the PTA has emphasised the valid point that, on the question of expense, the sum of £65 million would provide only six miles of city motorway. ✕

In an effort to attract commuter traffic from Hexham to Newcastle, British Rail has introduced a morning express with a return in the evening. At the same time, a new 7-days ticket has been made available between Hexham and Newcastle, with the additional facility of free car parking at Hexham. Hexham Rural District Council attempted to persuade British Rail to re-open Fourstones station on the grounds that bus services have been reduced since closure took place, but British Rail has rejected the appeal, stating that there was little hope of the station ever becoming viable.

In an effort to give the unstaffed stations between Newcastle and South Shields a face-lift, all old buildings have been demolished and replaced with small shelters. In addition, new electric column lighting has been fitted. Unfortunately, in the absence of any staff, the stations have been vandalised as soon as the work on them has been completed.

Some improvements have been made to the Middlesbrough-Whitby line service.

Finally, on an indirect railway note, British Rail reports that its steamers on Lake Windermere have carried a record number of passengers this year.

North-Western England

✓X Parliamentary sanction to a new electrified suburban rail system for Manchester has been given by the SELNEC (Manchester Central Area Railway, etc.) Act, 1972. The chief features of the scheme include a new tunnel from Higher Ardwick (south-east of Piccadilly) to Queen's Road (north-east of Victoria), 2¼ miles long and at a maximum depth of 80 feet, and new low-level stations at Piccadilly, Whitworth Street/Princess Street, St. Peter's Square/Albert Square, Market Street/Cross Street and Victoria. X

British Rail is considering a plan to discontinue the present Preston to Colne and Blackburn to Manchester local passenger services and to replace these with a fast circular service (with trains running in both directions) linking Blackburn, Accrington, Burnley (Manchester Road), Todmorden, Rochdale, Manchester, Salford, Bolton and Darwen. This news has caused considerable disquiet in the areas which would be affected should this scheme be carried out.

✓X The Transport Users' Consultative Committee for the North-Western Area has reported to the Secretary of State for the Environment on the proposed withdrawal of local passenger trains between Runcorn, Helsby and Chester. The Committee states that the withdrawal would cause hardship to certain children who travel to schools in Chester, but the introduction of a special bus service would alleviate this to some extent. In the Committee's opinion, hardship and inconvenience to commuters would be of a minimal nature and could be alleviated by the introduction of a bus service to meet their needs. The Committee also feels that much of the inconvenience and hardship could be eliminated if the opening of the Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge were restricted to periods outside the morning and evening peak hours. X

North and Central Wales

✓X A spokesman for British Rail has said that the number of people using the re-opened Shotton low-level station (Flintshire) has exceeded all expectations. X

Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwymdrobwlilllantysiliogogogoch station (Anglesey), famed as possessing the longest station name in Britain, is to be re-opened as an unstaffed halt in May, 1973. The cost is being borne jointly by Aethwy Rural District Council and the Department of the Environment. The station was previously re-opened temporarily during the enforced closure of the Menai Bridge.

The General Purposes Committee of Ffestiniog Urban District Council (Merioneth) recommended at a recent meeting that the attention of Mr. Richard Marsh, the Chairman of

the British Railways Board, should be drawn to the huge success of the Llechwedd Slate Caverns and the Stwlan Dam as a means of attracting passengers to the Llandudno-Blaenau Ffestiniog line.

From 11th September, revised bus services were introduced by Crosville Motor Services and Cardiganshire County Council on routes between Aberystwyth, Aberaeron, Lampeter, Newquay and Cardigan. These are said to offer improved rail connections at Aberystwyth for passengers travelling to West Wales.

✓✗ Members of the Cambrian Coast Line Action Group marched to 10, Downing Street on 18th November and left there, for the attention of the Prime Minister, a copy of a memorandum on the Machynlleth-Pwllheli line, a plea for its retention and long-term development. ✗

OTHER NEWS

The London Midland Region has mounted a publicity campaign for the Birmingham-Nuneaton-Leicester-Peterborough line. Among special facilities offered is a "two for the price of one" day return.

Alfreton (Derbyshire) station, which was closed in 1966, is to be rebuilt and it is expected to re-open in May, 1973. The total cost of the operation will be £92,000 and eleven local authorities will contribute £35,000 towards this. Free parking for 250 cars will be provided.

British Rail is being asked to re-open a number of closed stations on the Huddersfield-Penistone line so as to provide badly-needed revenue for the streamlined Huddersfield-Penistone-Sheffield service.

The new Greater Glasgow Passenger Transport Authority came into operation on 1st October.

WHAT OTHER SOCIETIES ARE DOING

Dart Valley Light Railway Limited (assisted by the Dart Valley Railway Association)

British Rail relinquished responsibility for providing a service on the Paignton-Kingswear branch line from 28th October. As from 30th October, British Rail is providing a Mondays to Fridays service on behalf of the Dart Valley Light Railway Limited. This arrangement will last for several weeks in order to prepare the way for the Dart Valley to take over operation. The temporary timetable comprises four journeys each way. This reduced service to meet essential needs was agreed with Devon County Council and permits engineering work to be carried out prior to the transfer. It is believed that the Dart Valley intends to run a similar number of trains during the forthcoming winter and that this is likely to be at financial loss to the company, which has asked the County Council for assistance.

The present headquarters of the Dart Valley Light Railway Limited are at Buckfastleigh Station, Buckfastleigh, Devon.

West Somerset Railway Company, Limited

The Society acknowledges receipt of the following statement from the West Somerset Railway Company, Limited, which has its registered office at 16, Elm Grove, Taunton, Somerset.

"The West Somerset Railway Company, Limited, is in its final stages of negotiations with British Rail for the purchase, at a cost of £200,000, the twenty five miles of railway line between Taunton and Minehead. It is proposed to open initially the line between the two termini of Taunton and Minehead, serving five intermediate stations. A regular passenger service, using diesel multiple units, will be run Monday to Saturday and on Sundays and, during the summer season, amenity trips will be organised, using steam locomotives.

The West Somerset Steam Railway Trust is being set up to organise and control the amenity side of the project. The Trust is a company limited by guarantee and has applied for registration under the Charity Act.

It is hoped that the legal technicalities of the purchase will be completed by March, 1973, and that trains will be running by early summer, 1973."

CORRECTIONS. The following corrections should be made to the last issue of the progress report :-

- p. 6. para. 3. line 7, Hull-Leeds grant, 1970: correct figure is "£369,000".
- p. 9. para. 1. line 2, delete "9th"

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

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Mr. Purser is responsible for branch and area reports, Mr. Hipperson for all other matter. To ensure inclusion in the next issue (to be published in March, 1973) material must be submitted to the appropriate editor so as to reach him by Saturday, 27th January, 1973.

PUBLISHED by the RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

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MEMBERS ONLY SUPPLEMENT: ISSUE No. 13

THE "BLUE BOOK"

✓✗ The Society has asked several MPs to raise parliamentary questions on the drastic proposals envisaged in the "Blue Book" (see main progress report, p.1.). Please will our members help us by writing in a private capacity to their own MP and to the Department of the Environment emphasising the social consequences of such proposals as well as their adverse effect on the future viability of British Rail. ✗

"RAILWAYS IN THE SEVENTIES"

✓✗ Our booklet under the above title is now with the printers and will probably be published early in the new year. We are planning to launch the publication at a press conference in London and, needless to say, will be distributing copies widely to government departments, MPs and British Rail. ✗

SOS (SAVE OUR SERVICES) CAMPAIGN

It is essential that as many members as possible attend the meeting to be held on 5th December (see main progress report, p. 2, for details). If you are prepared to act as a steward, please contact Mr. Banks.

RECRUITMENT

The correspondence columns of newspapers and periodicals often contain letters from people who are potential members of this Society. Members can help us, therefore, by keeping a close and regular watch on the letters to the editor contained in the newspapers and periodicals which they are in the habit of reading. However, members are asked not to write themselves to authors of appropriate letters, but to kindly send cuttings to Mr. G.F. Manley, of 42, Hillsborough Court, London, N.W. 6. (Where it is not possible to send cuttings, please give details of the title and date of the newspaper or periodical, name and address of the writer and a few words to describe the contents of the letter). In suitable cases, Mr. Manley will send official invitations to join the Society, accompanied by recruiting literature, to letter writers.

The objects of this procedure are to (a) prevent duplication of effort, (b) facilitate the maintenance of a central register of people who have been contacted and (c) avoid sending recruitment letters to people who are already members.

SALES DEPARTMENT

Orders and other communications to the Sales Department should, for the time being, be sent to the General Secretary.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

A subscription renewal form for 1973 is enclosed with this members only supplement. Where a member finds it necessary to prepare a new banker's order, he is requested to ensure that all previous banker's orders re his subscription are cancelled.

KNOW YOUR REPRESENTATIVE!

The following information supersedes that given in all previous members only supplements.

BRANCHES

London and Home Counties Greater London, Essex, Surrey, Kent, Sussex, Hertfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Berkshire.

Branch Secretary : D. J. Martins, 54, Canonbury Road, London. N. 1.

East Anglian Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Isle of Ely, Huntingdon and Peterborough, Rutland and parts of Leicestershire, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire and Lincolnshire within the area bounded by The Wash, Grantham, Melton Mowbray, Corby, Kettering, Bedford (Anglia Territory of British Rail).

Branch Secretary : T. J. Garrod, 15, Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk.

Three Counties Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Worcestershire.

Branch Secretary : J. H. M. Fawfry, 49, Clarence Square, Cheltenham
Gloucestershire. GL50 4JR.

Wessex Boundaries: Bridport, Yeovil, Westbury, Newbury, Reading, Aldershot, Havant and the coast (including the Isle of Wight).

Branch Secretary : J. C. Honeysett, Willingdon, Broadoak, Botley,
Southampton, SO3 2E0

AREAS

Devon and Cornwall

Area Representative : Position vacant

North-Eastern England Northumberland, County Durham and the North Riding of Yorkshire.

Area Representative : Position vacant

North-Western England Liverpool and Manchester metropolitan areas and Lancashire

Area Representative : P. E. Johnson, 33, Hurdsfield Road,
Stockport, Cheshire, SK2 7ND.

North and Central Wales The counties of Anglesey, Caernarvon, Cardigan, Denbigh, Flint^s, Merioneth and Montgomery and that part of Shropshire which lies north of the Shrewsbury - Aberystwyth line and west of the Shrewsbury - Crew line (including those two lines); also that part of Cheshire which is not in any other area.

Area Representative : Position vacant.

North of Scotland the counties of Caithness, Sutherland, Ross and Cromarty, Inverness, Naim, Moray, Banff, Aberdeen.

Area Representative : F. G. Thompson, 31, Braeside Park, Balloch, Inverness.

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