# Railwatch

AN INDEPENDENT VOICE FOR RAIL USERS

NO SR

DECEMBER 1993

90p

### I have been to England. I have looked at the way they are trying to privatise British Rail. And I know it will fail.

- Masashi Matsuda, President JR East, Japanese railways

Virtually everyone knows it won't work but the Government pressed ahead anyway. The erivatisation Bill completed its shoddy and aambolic passage through Parliament on 4 November.

A whole host of inexperienced outsiders are now let loose to meddle and tinker with the railway system when what it obviously needs is proper investment.

The Railways Act gives no safeguards about fare levels, family railcards, minimum service levels and many other reasonable public concerns. The Bill's progress merely highlighted the contempt with which the Government views the inclustry and its users.

British Rail is relegated to the position of operator of "last resort" even though it is more efficient than many private companies and internationally recognised as a success.

Rail workers are insulted for clinging to the ideals of working for a public service. Rail users have been largely ignored.

In turn though the Government is now viewed with suspicion by an increasing number of people who have closely watched its appalling handling of this 'ghastly Bill'.

Rail workers believe the Treasury is trying to jack their 64 billion pension fund. Users expect fares to rise, services to be cut and eventually lines to be at risk.

After a series of secret deals, the suspicion remains that there is a hidden agenda behind this legislation, inspired either by the dead hand of the Treasury or the malign influence of the road lobby.

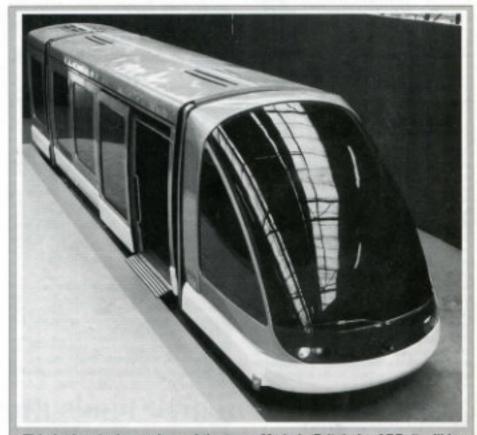
To add insult to injury, the Government is now considering spending millions of pounds sending out 20 million leaflets explaining its position.

Members of RDS and just about every rail expert in Britain, as well as visiting foreigners, have been warning the Government and Tory MPs that privatisation will be a disaster.

As many as 83% of the public have also denounced it, according to one survey, and 93% of senior rail managers, according to another

Suzanne May of Transport 2000 told a Save Our Railways rally in October: 'It seems to be a policy designed to push people on to the roads just when there is an awareness that we must reduce use of the car to protect the environment and reduce pollution."

Bishop Hugh Montefiore said: 'It will be an



This is the sleek new face of the tram. Made in Britain by ABB, it will be exported to Strasbourg in February. By the end of 1994, 26 of the low-floor vehicles will be operating. While a few British cities have woken up to the tram's advantages, most remain locked in their fatal love affair with the car. It's about time they cleaned up their track record. Picture: ABB

unmitigated disaster for the British people and the Government."

Labour's John Prescott said: 'This has absolutely nothing to do with providing a better rail service or saving money. It will actually cost more money. It is all about robbing the rail workers' pension fund."

Meanwhile Transport Secretary John MacGregor is still boasting of the Government's "huge road programme".

More than ever, RDS general secretary Trevor

Garrod warned the rail users conference. "We need a strong, well-informed and articulate rail users lobby if privateers are to muscle in and start running the trains we rely on." We must complain loudly whenever there is a deterioration of services.

And we are still waiting for proper go-aheads for a whole series of rail projects — Thameslink 2000, the Channel Tunnel fast link, CrossRail, Dornoch, electrification of the Midland main line and upgrading the West Coast main line.

## Helping hand for disabled

Several members have pointed out that Ruitmetch is difficult to read for people with sight problems so we are considering two initiatives. First editorial board memberlames Apsey is looking into the question of providing Kaihustch on audio tape. Second we will be offering limited numbers of doublesize Railaustch to members.

There are several RDS committee members with special interest in the needs of the disabled and the national executive has appointed Peter Lawrence (tel 0603 743446) as officer for the disabled.

One member is at present researching a pilot TV programme on transport matters which might raise some of the issues which concern disabled travellers.

We would like to hear from people who would be interested in the tape, the large size Railwatch or might like to talk about the TV programme. In the first instance, please contact editor Ray King, 4 Christchurch Square, London E9 7HU (081 985 8548). InterCity has a good record of providing facilities for dis-

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REVOR

abled travellers and other organisations are learning too. European Passenger Services is intending to make facilities available for disabled people to travel in international trains through the Channel Tunnel. There will be positions for two wheelchair users per train in first class, although first class fares will not be levied. Lavatories and sleeper trains will also be accessible to wheelchairs.

At Waterioo International there will be ramps, lifts, travellators, escalators and a lowlevel desk without windows in the ticket office. There will also be tactile platform edges to alert blind people.

Union Railways are providing a double pack of audio cassettes to 1,000 organisations throughout North and East London, Kent and Essex to help blind and partially sighted people understand the plan to build the fast link from the Channel Tunnel to London.

Union Railways has produced the tapes in association with Talking Newspapers Enterprises of Heathfield, Sussex (Claire Campbell 0435 866102).

### Europe

#### here

#### we go

When the Channel Tunnel opens next year, it will be 30 years since I first set foot on foreign soil. It is also nearly 30 years since I had to write an essay entitled Le Tunnel sous la Manche (The Tunnel under the Channel) for A-level French.

In those days, it was still possible to board an old-style steamer at Harwich and watch cars being lowered by crane into the hold.

The three decades since have seen roll-on rolloff ferries become virtually universal. Meanwhile there has also been a vast increase in air

Britain's entry into the European Community made the movement of people and goods between the 12 countries much easier.

The Channel Tunnel gives Britain a fixed rail link to Europe for the first time and is vital in allowing rail to compete in the international transport world.

Its commissioning over the coming months will be a cause for celebration by those of us in RDS who have campaigned for it.

A team of RDS members and supporters has been working on a book, Europe beyond the Transel, which will be published in March jointly with Leading Edge.

The book encourages people to travel by train to the near continent and is the logical extension to our Britain by Rail books. Look out for details in the next Railwatch.

We have pressed for years for a high speed line from London to the tunnel, such as the French have already built and the Belgians are hullding.

Our international and EC committee recently produced an eight-page report on the Channel Tunnel fast link. It has been sent to nearly 50 bodies including the Department of Transport, British Rail and local authorities.

We had meetings in summer and early

autumn with Union Railways, Kent County Council, the London Borough of Newham and Ashford Borough Council.

No one route is perfect (as the citizens of Amiens, who yearned in vain to be on the French high speed line, will tell you) but the more argument there is about details and alternatives, the longer we will have to wait for the line to be built and the greater will be the pressure for new roads and motorways to be built through Kent.

Our enthusiasm for the tunnel does not close our eyes to other links with the Continent however. We do not expect the ferry companies to shut up shop when it opens and rail links to ports should be maintained.

That is why we lodged an objection to the closure of Dover Western Ducks station. At the very least, it should remain open until the effect of the tunnel on the ferries is fully

Another aspect of our international work is forging links with similar organisations in other countries. In October, during a visit to Paris, I met members of the FNAUT (National Federation of Associations of Transport Users) which provides a voice for users of rail and other environment-friendly modes of transport.

We are endeavouring to establish a relationship with the Verkehrs Club Deutschland which has similar aims. Our freight committee made useful contacts in Germany when it was researching the carriage of hazardous cargo.

With European elections as well as the tunnel opening in the next six months, RDS needs to expand these links. We would be pleased to hear from other members with potentially useful contacts on the Continent.

 Trevor Garrod is general secretary of RDS and writes a column every four weeks for the magazine RAIL.

## Just the job

Investment in railways is one of the best ways to stimulate the economy and creates twice as many jobs as road building.

Not only does it guarantee jobs in high-tech industries making trains, advanced signalling equipment and information technology, it also expands the use of the most efficient transport mode — railways.

Building more roads however creates a few jobs for tipper lorry drivers and low-grade labourers but encourages use of the most wasteful transport mode — roads.

British-based railway equipment makers and design-and-build teams need investment at home if they are to continue to be successful in export markets.

This market is becoming ever more lucrative as the world cries out for advanced railway systems.

The Americans are considering buying a high-speed rail system virtually off the shelf but while they make up their minds they are testing a French TGV, a German ICE and a Swedish tilting train. A British train was noticeably absent.

The British Government has still not woken up to this changing world. It has delayed rail improvement projects and starved the railways of investment cash. Yet Secretary of State John MacGregor has justified his M25 widening proposals on the grounds of creating jobs in the construction industry.

Up to a point! But they will be short-term jobs. Building line I of the Midland Metro by contrast would create 1,100 jobs, then 101 people will be needed to operate it and further 1,500 jobs will be created through economic regeneration.

A new leaflet on jobs and rail investment is included with this copy of Railwatch. Please send it on to a key person who might be influenced by it, whether an MP, a local councillor or a newspaper, ideally with a covering letter urging that it should be read carefully.

If you require extra copies, send an SAE to our publicity officer, Roland White, Latymer, The Drive, Belmont, Surrey SM2 7DJ.

If you think more copies of the leaflet should be printed so that it can be more widely circulated, please enclose a donation which will go to printing costs. We have so far produced 6,000, most of which were paid for by RDS.

The Railway Industry Association made a small donation to extend the print run.

#### Lesson one in privatisation

Tory hopes of a private train running to their party conference in Blackpool collapsed when not enough delegates were prepared to pay the 695 return fare.

## Many-headed monster

One of the major themes of the rail users conference in October was how we are all going to learn to deal with the many-headed menster which the Government has let loose on the rail system with its privatisation plans.

Even before Parliament gave its approval for the change, British Rail was in the throes of another wide-ranging series of reorganisations.

Privatisation's immediate effect will be to turn InterCity from a single entity which is making a £100 million profit into eight train operating companies most of which will need to be subsidised.

This ironic side effect was revealed by the best known railwayman of our time Chris Green, InterCity's managing director, who was guest speaker at the conference.

"We will make a big profit one day and be needing a subsidy the next." He joked: "The railways in Britain are world leaders at reorganisation."

He also agreed that privatisation would mean that there were more jobs for managers after being told by one delegate that 35 additional managers had been recruited to run the Gatwick Express now that it was a shadow franchise.

He also admitted that Network SouthEast had recruited 10 people to "walk the platforms" to persuade people to choose NSE trains rather than the Gatwick Express.

Mr Green, who is returning to ScotRail to lead it into the uncertain post-privatisation era, was given an enthusiastic welcome by the 120 delegates at the conference.

He predicted that there will be ferocious battles for funding if the railway is to be turned into a modern system.

Mr Green, who has already revitalised ScotRail and Network SouthEast, pointed out that InterCity operates 780 trains a day roughly equivalent to the number of planes flown by British Airways.

Each of the new Channel Tunnel trains will be equivalent to two jumbo jets and Waterloo international could hold the equivalent of 10 symbos. But the big advantage of the railways is the massive capacity they still have, compared to the traffic-ridden roads and airports.

## **RUG 93**

Rail User Groups conference University College London 23 October 1993

Rail has come to the rescue of road-congested Heathrow in the shape of the new link to Paddington which would take people to central London in 15 minutes compared to the 60 minutes it takes on the Tube.

And the French were preparing high-speed trains to break through the 300 mph barrier. The TGV now has the take-off speed of a jet and is the natural choice for journeys of up to 300 miles.

British InterCity has 40% of the market for journeys of 250 miles.

Rail would also be the best way for British travellers to get to Paris and Brussels.

In Britain, the big question was how many liabilities would the new train operating companies be saddled with? Who would be taking responsibility for maintaining the Forth Bridge for instance? And who would want to rely on subsidies from the Treasury?

There was already a marked reluctance to provide cash for CrossRail which was more important than the Channel Tunnel fast link because it would transform life for 10 million people.

"Of course the right time to authorise these things is in the middle of a recession," said Mr Green. "But I can't imagine it happening in Britain. We are in an investment limbo. Just look at the row there has been even over the funding of the Jubilee line."

He reminded us that Britain's prototype 225 high speed train is sitting in a shed in Derby because there was no money to upgrade the West Coast main line.

"Britain invented the tilting train but Sweden built it," said Mr Green. He revealed that the electrical infrastructure on the West Coast main line is well past its best.

"We have to start up the trains in turn, if we

started them all up together, it would blow the fuse."

He said the InterCity 125, "still my favourite train", would keep the Great Western main line going until around the year 2,000. Then it would have to be electrified although a tilting diesel might serve Plymouth.

He revealed that InterCity was opening a telesales office in Newcastle (0800 450450) so people can buy rail tickets with 'plastic money' and have them delivered to their homes.

Answering a question about cycles on trains, Mr Green promised: 'I must look at this when I get to Scotland where there is a great demand. But there are no easy solutions.'

Giving advice to groups who wanted to fight to keep network benefits, Mr Green said: "Target the things that really matter."

At the conference workshop sessions in the afternoon, delegates did just that.

One group studied publicity and media relations while another tried to identify problems which would be thrown up by privatisation and find solutions for user groups trying to tackle them.

One of the overriding themes was that local authorities will have to take greater interest in rail, as central government tries to divest itself of the responsibility.

RDS president Michael Caton had this message for delegates: "Keep on at your MPs. If rail privatisation fails it is going to be a huge political failure for the Government. Keep up the pressure."

See for yourself: There are a limited number of places available for an RDS visit on Thursday 27 January at 1330 to the new Waterloo International station. If interested, please send an SAE to Paul Krebs, 24 Bartok House, 30 Lansdowne Walk, London W11 31,T.

Go for it: Places are available after the official oppening of the Channel Tunnel on 6 May on the Eurostar trains from London for day trips to Paris, Lille, or Brussels. Cost would probably be around £70. If you are interested, please write to Roland White, Latymer, The Drive, Belmont, Surrey SM2 7DJ. Please state your preferred destination, time of departure from London and whether you would like organised sightseeing, a transport visit or to go off on your own. Enclose an SAE.

### The expensive truth about Britain's loading gauge

By GEORGE BOYLE

The last issue of Railwatch contained an article about the restrictive UK loading gauge and a new report that alleges that conversion to a proposed 'piggyback gauge' can be made for some £300 million — one tenth of the previous estimates.

It sounds too good to be true, and unfortunately it is. We would all like to see the UK gauge able to cope with continental size wagons or even the slimmed down piggyback gauge.

But this report has made a crucial error in its assumptions about the existing loading gauge which has caused this tenfold reduction in estimated costs.

In studying the existing leading gauge, the consultants have assumed that all bridges rebuilt for electrification purposes were built to the Department of Transport's new works structure gauge.

This would have meant that all bridges and tunnels from London to Glasgow and Edinburgh would have been suitable for the proposed 'piggyback gauge' without further work.

This is simply not the case. In order to save cost, and in order to obtain authority for electrification work that would otherwise have been prohibitively expensive, BR and the DoT produced a much reduced structure gauge into which the overhead wires can just be squeezed.

All bridges were built with this gauge in mind and extra clearance was only obtained if it was no more expensive to do so. The net result is that almost every bridge that was rebuilt for electrification, and a lot more that previously managed to squeeze wires through without any rebuilding, would have to be altered again.

Contrary to the assertion that the expensive item was the need to cut back platform faces, this is actually quite a minor item compared to the bridge and tunnel work involved. For example, in the 200 miles from Preston to Coatbridge there are only nine intermediate stations, several of which have avoiding lines available.

I am sorry to disappoint readers of Railwatch, but the original estimates of £3-4 billion for a core network are still valid and still just as unobtainable.

 George Boyle is a member of the RDS Freight Committee. He can be contacted at 200 Buxton Road, Furness Vale, Stockport, SK12 7PX.

### PLATFORM For your views on the present and future of rail

#### Gruelling experience

My family and I have been travelling by train to the Cambrian coast now for the last seven years and in all previous years have had a pleasant, roomy journey on a relaxing locohauled train (with reserved seats).

On August Bank Holiday weekend, we once again travelled from Birmingham, but this time on a grossly overcrowded two-car class 150 Sprinter. These suburban units are totally unsuitable for a gruelling five-hour journey.

There was no room for bikes and two disabled people in wheelchairs were shunted into doorways, luggage was all over the floor and blocking doorways, and the conductor was unable to check or issue tickets.

Passengers should not have to experience such discomfort when travelling on holiday.

Other disadvantages of class 150 Sprinter travel: No tables for children especially to use. No room to stretch your legs. No open windows to breathe in some fresh air (a girl fainted on our train). No adequate room for heavy luggage, wheelchairs or pushchairs. Only one toilet on a two-car train. No smoking thoughout the train.

The five-hour journey was the most horrestdous railway travel I have experienced in recent years. If this is all we are promised in the future, people will flock to the roads in

I fear for the future of the Cambrian Line and all rural routes undergoing drastic costcutting exercises at present.

Mike Ware, Flat 1, Clarkson House, 5 Great Stanhope Street, Bath, Avon 8A1 2BQ

#### View over the Down

As a new member of RDS, may I suggest that Railwatch uses less emotive words in articles? In the last issue there were comments about the M3 being built near Winchester.

I can assure you as a Winchester resident for 11 years that most people have welcomed the building of the new road. The present bypass has been impossible and impassable at times.

Most of the violent protests were made by outsiders after the local non-violent protest group fizzled out. A tunnel would have cost millions of pounds more than the cutting-

Alan Cooke, 3 Bere Close, Winchester SO22 5HY

Editor's note: One of the reasons RDS is capaigning for better rail services is to avoid the need for such damaging road building as at Twyford Down. The beauty of the down has inspired many people, not just locals. Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes said of it: "We, the human race, didn't put it there; it is not ours to take away."

John Stewart who has been involved in the campaign against the M3 at Twyford Down said that most people in Winchester tacitly supported the protesters' direct action. The protesters were given food and money by local people. On big days of action, people came from all over Britain because the scheme had become a symbol of what was wrong with transport planning in Britain.

Along with five friends, Twyford Down activist Emma Must spent two weeks in prison for defying an order not to cross a fence on the site. She points out that building the road has destroyed mediaeval trackways, a Bronze Age burial ground and an iron Age village. In addition there are 1,000 other heritage sites and green spaces in Britain threatened by the Government's

road building programme. As for emotive language, one commentator in Cycling Today said of road building: "Anyone with half a brain can see it is throwing good money after bad in pursuit of a fantasy that can never be realised; universal mobility via the private car."

The Department of Transport says the fourmile road through Twyford Down is costing £25.9 million, cheap if true when compared with the (3 billion for widening the M25.

#### Lorries and the law

Your July edition reckoned that 93% of hauliers are breaking the law. This is extremely high but when figures like that are bandled about it brings any serious thought to an end. You should use sensible and well balanced argument and back it up with facts, collected from other sources such as the police or the Ministry of Transport. Cheshire motorway police had a major checkpoint on a Friday afternoon between 2 and 10 pm in August. They stopped every HGV they could and managed 800 trucks of which 30% were illegal in some way or other. I reckon about 50% are breaking the law.

Frederick Agombur, East Coast Truckers (86) Club, Post Box 20, Cromer, Norfolk NR27 9AG

Editor's note: Mr Agombar's club is calling on the Government to legislate to improve conditions for lorry drivers and to prevent them being put under pressure to break the law. He points out that drivers are sometimes paid on a percentage of the lorry's earnings (usually 20%) and the pay rates force drivers to "cut corners". Some companies pay their drivers by mileage with one firm paying 10 pence a mile. The club says this is in breach of European Community regulations which are not properly enforced in Britain. Mr Agombar says that the Road Haulage Association and the Freight Transport Association have given the club "little support" in highlighting the problems. The club's president Glenn ohnson says owner drivers are often forced to work illegal hours and run overweight.

#### Law breakers

I was interested in the comment in the last Railwatch about the proportion of heavy lorries (60%) which exceed the speed limit of 40 mph on single carriageway roads. You would think that such a speed limit never existed, nor the HGV limits of 50 mph on dual carriageways and 60 mph on

Why are such excess speeds, particularly anything over the HGV top limit of 60 mph, not detected and prosecuted from the tachograph records which, to my knowledge, all HGVs have to have? From enquiries I have made, it seems that if the tachograph records speeds, which I believe it does, then any excesses recorded are not used to bring any prosecutions. Is there some agreement between the Ministry of Transport and the road hauliers?

The way in which HGVs are allowed to break speed limits is a factor militating against fair competition with the railways.

Peter H Spencer, 31a Ewell Downs Road, Ewell, Epsom, Surrey, KT17 3BT

#### Safety first

Spokesmen for the railways often present their arguments too defensively. Perhaps they should adopt a more aggressive stance, follow the practice of the road lobbyists who almost convince with the confidence with

which they make their assertions, even when their figures are not all they might be. We should make more of the superb safety record of the railways.

David G Guild, 53 Grange Road, Edinburgh

#### Seaside stupidity

As part of the scheme to "regenerate Morecambe", BR is to abandon its station on the promenade and build a new station a quarter of a mile away.

After promises that the new staion would have waiting rooms and be staffed, lack of Government funding means that BR is to build what is little more than an unstaffed

This will certainly not contribute to the regeneration of the town. It will mean the end of excursion trains any longer than four

The latest idea is to offer through trains to Preston and Manchester. I suspect this is all part of the demotion of the West Coast main line to second-class status.

J B W Keighley, 66 Levens Drive, Morecambe, Lancs

#### Ministerial waffle

I have no car and love travelling by train but it is most depressing to see how our wonder-ful rail system has been savaged and sabotaged. Of course there is worse to come.

I have written to my MIP about concessionary fares but he never replies himself, merely passing my letter on to a minister so that all I get is ministerial waffle.

He reminds me of the character in HMS Pinafore who "always voted at his party's call and never thought of thinking for himself at all". The response he sent me from Public Transport Minister Roger Freeman is a terrible letter and gives me no hope at all. I hope some MPs are more forthcoming, Elsie Karbacz, 24 Oaktrood Avenue, West

Mersea, Colchester, Essex CO5 8EJ

#### Costly mistake

Mr Alan Stennett's reply in the October Railwatch to my earlier letter proves the point that I was making.

The figures produced by the AA differentiate between running costs (fuel, oil, tyres, servi ing, repairs/replacements) and standing charges (car licence, insurance, depreciation, AA subscription)

The "fixed" running costs that Mr Stennett refers to are not running costs at all, but standing charges. As I made clear in my letter, it was only the running costs that I was speaking of, even though there is an argument for depreciation to be mileage related to some extent.

In the AA figures for RUNNING costs, of the five ranges of engine size used, the percentage that relates to fuel are, in increasing engine size: 44%, 45%, 46%, 44%, 39%.

These figures were published in summer 1993, and so are slightly different from the figures I used before. Therefore, the "small addition for tyres, oil and other consumables" that Mr Stennett refers to, amounts to between 117% and 156% - not very small to my mind. If he is only comparing his fuel costs to the train fare, that comparison is grossly unfair.

How many people realise that the RUNNING cost of a small car is 13p per mile, rising to nearly 29p per mile for a large car. If this figure was worked out for many journeys, it would be seen how much cheaper the train often is. If standing charges are added in as well, at 30,000 miles a year, the total would come to between 21p and 64p. a mile, while at a more normal 10,000 miles a year, it would be between 29p and 89p a

My original plea still stands - How can we make people aware of the facts, and how can we get them put out by the mass

The Rev P L Roberts, APC Manse, Camustiel. Applecross, By Strathcarron, Ross-shire, Scotland IV54 817

#### Whittington flyer

I was pleased to find, in my latest Railwatch, a 'flyer' inviting contributions to the cost of building a station at Whittington, on the Shrewsbury-Chester line. I have long felt that organisations like RDS work best when they concentrate all resources on one objective, military-style.

I was all set to send a cheque for £30 to the campaign: not a lot, I know, but if every RDS member did likewise, it would add p to just about the £100,000 sought what a propaganda coup for RDS, and a display of its effectiveness as an organisation, that would be!

Then I started to think. Why Whittington? What's so special about this station that RDS felt justified in endorsing it to the extent of inviting members to spend some of their scarce cash, not on national or branch projects, or even their own local projects, but on this one in particular?

I was even less impressed on consulting a map, which shows Whittington to be within three or four miles of two existing stations. Other stationless communities are much worse off. The involvement of what sounds like a private school may be praiseworthy, but how much traffic will it generate for the line?

So what criteria justify supporting the Whittington campaign? Community involvement? Official support? Local Authority financial support? (But those three are available in many other cases). Likely to transform the line's economics? (I think of projects elsewhere which swould have such an effect). Or is it just practicality - there is a funding gap which can realistically be filled by subscription?

As I said, I think the principle of the appeal is great, but it would help if RDS explained its policy on such matters, and its criteria for choosing which project(s) to endorse in this fashion

Andrew McCracken, 44 Kylintra Crescent, Grantonon-on-Spey. PH26 3E5

#### Inept policy

After a letter of mine was published in the Southern Evening Echo, several people wrote to me agreeing that the railways are the lifeblood of the country and should remain a national service. They abbor the stupidity of this Government's present misguided, inept and stupid policy. We must find ways to fight it tooth and nail.

The Continental rail network is state owned and runs efficiently. Why can't

Kenneth M Bryant, 6 Grays Road, Farncom Godalming, Survey GU7 3LT

## Watch what you buy

Most car makers and oil companies are members of the main road lobby organisation, the British Road Federation.

It presents road building as the only solution to transport chaos and by a unique method of accounting, it suggests there are no costs in building roads, only benefits.

The Government stupidly accepts this line and does not compare rail and public transport schemes with road building.

Because it has so many wealthy backers, the BRF has at least £482,000 a year to campaign on its platform of Building Roads Forever.

Increasingly companies are beginning to realise how unpopular they will become if it is known that they are funding an organisation which is helping to wreck our environment.

But the following companies are members of the BRF. Do you want to buy their products?

Bass Brewers (Augustus Barnet off-licences, Barbican, Carling, Stones, Worthington, Mateus, Martini)

Beazer Special Products (Butterley bricks, Hofels, Seven Seas, New Era, Embassy, JPS, Players, Golden Virginia)

Boots the Chemists (Farley's, Crookes, Nurofen, Halfords, Optrex, Strepsils)

Grand Metropolitan (Burger King, Express Foods, Bailey's Irish Cream, Gilbey's,

ICI (Dulux, gardening products) Marks & Spencer

John Menzies

P&O Ferries (North Sea Ferries)

Reckitt & Colman (Down to Earth, Colman's, Robinson's Barley Water and baby food, Disprin, Harpic)

Rothmans UK (Dunhill, Rothmans, Cartier) WH Smith

Tate & Lyle Sugars (T&L sugar and syrup) Trusthouse Forte catering (THF hotels) Weetabix (Alpen, Ready Brek)

According to Charlie Lloyd of the magazine London Cyclist, the power behind the BRF is the road construction industry.

The AA, RAC, Road Haulage Association and the Freight Transport Association are all

Many roads are built to exclude the majority of the population (non-car owners). Pedestrians and cyclists are banned from all motorways and from Britain's most expensive road, the notorious one-mile long Limehouse Link

The BRF and its attentive audience at the Department of Transport now try to stress the environmental advantages of new roads!

The defensive BRF is saying that the proposed East London River Crossing could have a cycle lane on it, knowing that all the roads leading to it are engineered to eliminate pedestrian and cycle traffic. Notable for their absence from the BRF are Amoco, Esso, BMW

With the current knowledge about the dangers to health from car and lorry pollution, the BRF and its member companies should modify their stance.

Perhaps they should remind motorists to feel guilty every time they put a key into the gnition and industry to be ashamed every time goods are loaded on to the back of a

The BRF should also be reminded that road building is attracting ever more traffic, destroying large numbers of sites of special scientific interest and degrading the quality of all our lives.

If you want to know more about the BRF, you can contact them at Pillar House, 194-202 Old Kent Road, London SE1 5TG.

Alternative information however is available from the Ethical Consumer, 16 Nicholas Street, Manchester M1 4EJ, particularly issue 24, published in April. The brands and BRF membership details are based on 1991 research.

Wheels Within Wheels, a 1987 book by Mick Hamer is even more revealing.

Thanks to RDS member Steven Harmer for keeping track.

#### \*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*\*

Lincoln first: Lincoln was one of the worst casualties for service cuts in the October timetable. So perhaps it is right that the annual general meeting of RDS will be held there in 1994. The date has been fixed for 30 April. It will be the first time we have held a national event in the county, whose council has been very supportive of rail. Despite the cuts, it has connecting trains to the East Coast main line and has through trains to Sheffield, Nottingham, Leicester and Birmingham.

#### \*\*\*\*\*\*

North west showtime: Infrarail 94 is to be staged at the G-Mex exhibition centre in Manchester from 6-8 September next year. For details, phone 0707 275641.

RDS LOTTERY WINNERS August: I Rushton, Nelson £58.40, L. Kooros, Harleston, Suffolk £36.50, Brian Hastings, Scunthorpe £21.90, H L Cook, Reading £14.60, Roger White, North Harrow £7.30, Charles Rowe, Orpington £7.30.

September: Donald Graham, Worksop £58. Brian Hastings, Scunthorpe £36.25, Bernard Eyre, Norwich £21.75, Paul McLoughlin, Rainham £14.50, M Savage, Cleethorpes £7.25, J M Hounslow, Watford £7.25.

October: Geoffrey Bate, Wolverhampton £58, Andy Brabin, London £36.25, R Woodcraft, Leeds £21.75, B Easter, London £14.50, A J Wallis, Clacton £7.25, J Adams, Stowmarket

· If you would like to join the lottery for one year, send a cheque for £12 to Dave Finch, 28 Neville Avenue, Kidderminster, Worcs DY11 7AL. Make cheques payable to RDS and include your membership number.

## Ivory towers of pollution

#### By TREVOR GARROD

The Department of Transport has failed to address the impact of transport on the environment. A recent document issued in the name of Transport Secretary John MacGregor suggested that motorists could help "the environment" by not throwing litter out of their car windows. Wow!

We have over the years tried to persuade the department to wake up to reality and treat rail fairly. Recently we also sent comments on its Paying for Better Motor-

Although there are obvious problems like traffic diverting on to even less suitable roads, RDS welcomes the principle of limiting the demand for road space by charging. The demand for rail space is already constrained by having expensive tickets at peak times.

We suggest that a first step to road pricing would be to abolish road tax while at the same time increasing fuel duty. In the long term, sophisticated charging for urban road space could raise revenue to be invested in local

We also suggest that revenue could be raised by abolishing company car tax concessions and by taxing car parking in central areas.

The Department of Transport - often accused of being the department of roads - occupies a tower block in Marsham Street, next door to the Department of the Environment which seems to have a few more robust ideas about transport than its neighbour.

It has issued draft planning policy guidance note 13 which suggests that abandoned rail routes should be preserved so the option of reopening is retained.

That is only sensible and reflects RDS policy. It is the reason why we and Transport 2000 called for the Bedford southern bypass to be carried over the Bedford-Sandy trackbed on a bridge.

We have also spelled out the environmental advantages of rail in a response to a DoE consultation paper on sustainable development strategy. We called for more electrification, new stations and reopenings coupled with fiscal measures to allow rail to compete with road on a level playing field.

We also sent the DoE further copies of the 1992 RDS document Our Environment - A Bigger Role for Rail (£5.25) post free from our sales officer).

We have not yet reached the ideal world in which transport decisions are made on environmental as well as commercial and political grounds, but at least the DoE is making a few modest steps in the right

One of its biggest failings however is the proper monitoring of traffic pollution levels. Test sites have been put in quiet streets, parks and pedestrian areas giving a misleading impression of the dangers at the kerbside. Even here "very poor" air quality was reported.

The Department of the Environment has only 12 urban air quality monitoring stations, while Germany has 200.

So inadequate and misleading is it that the European Commission was considering taking Britain to the European Court. Traffic fumes are now blamed for the explosion in asthma cases among children. 2,000 people a year now die in asthma attacks, more victims of the Government's policy of promoting car use

Laboratory tests at St Bartholomew's Hospital in London have found that the body's production of chemicals which trigger asthma increases fivefold after exposure to levels of nitrogen dioxide found at the

Friends of the Earth accuse the Government of massaging the statistics to disguise the levels of pollution.

## Escape from the freeze

October to provide Birmingham with a modern Cross-city service.

The three-car 90 mph trains are running from Lichfield to Redditch cutting journey times by 20 minutes. The project was approved in 1990 when the Tory government was worried about losing the Mid-Staffordshire by-elec-

Commuters had been getting increasingly angry about delays and cancellations to services operated by 30-year-old diesels.

Now though, while rail projects throughout Britain are frozen, the Cross-city trains are

However the muddled anti-rail thinking at the Department of Transport and the Treasury which delayed the project is revealed in a new book about the line written by RDS member John Boynton.

John's book Rails Across the City admits there is little hope that this backward thinking will change in the near future, especially with the added problem of privatisation.

His 112-page book is aimed at both rail enthusiast and general reader and is the first book about the 33-mile line from its Victorian beginnings in 1837 to the present day.

He talked to rail workers, including one who began his career at Bournville shed in 1916, as well as delving into official BR archives.

He gives authentic glimpses into railway life, including the traumatic arrival of ambulance trains at Selly Oak with wounded soldiers from the First World War battle of the

He also reveals the enthusiasm which greeted the first diesels in the 1950s and how the line became the busiest diesel-operated line in the world, carrying 30,000 passengers per day,

The book contains over 80 photographs, including ones of the Lichfield line under construction during the 1880s, and newly discovered pictures of the Sutton Coldfield crash of 1955. There are many studies of steam and diesel by local amateur photographer Peter Shoesmith

The 24 maps and plans include Cadbury's internal railway at its fullest extent.

The early days of the railway saw the first widespread use of imported locomotives and the world's first Post Office trains. It was also realised here as early as 1841 that a national integrated network was preferable to hostile



Before the electric age dawns for B has Cross-city line: A Redditch diesel unit tackles the snow at Longbrids ...uncl J. ary 1982. Picture: Peter Sharemith

competition. What a pity that we have determinedly ignorant political masters t Rails Across the City is published by Mid land Books, PO Box 323, Kidderm Worcs DY10 4YY, ISBN 0 9522248 0 1 printed on art paper with laminated a and costs £9.95 including post and pack can be obtained direct from the put (make cheques payable to Mid Er Books). A donation of 50p will be me RDS national funds for each order mention that you are a member of RDS.

### Abroad on the Broads

A new book which helps the rail ram discover the distinctive areas of North N and the Broads has just been publish rail-friendly Leading Edge.

The publisher joined forces with the Authority and Regional Railway to p what it believes is the 'essel w guide which also includes the Suffolk B Author Debbie Bartlett was jointly fun Leading Edge and the Broads Authorit additional support from British Rail. Ti includes fascinating historical infor-

about the area, particularly the development of its rail network, which even today provides

probably the best enjoyed by any national park area in Britain. There are 17 self-guided trails starting and finishing at railway stations, many of which also offer the option for those travelling by boat, of starting from a convenient mooring. Among walks featured are routes from Berney Arms station on Halvergate Marshes on the Norwich-Great Yarmouth via Reed-

proposals. « The publishers and the Broads Authority hope that the book - which is generously illustrated with black and white and colour photographs by Richard Denyer - will help ncrease awareness and use of this and other

ham line, identified by many commentators as vulnerable to closure under privatisation

The book will be available from Broads Authority information centres as well as good bookshops.

acovering North Norfolk and the Broads by Jebbie Bartlett is published by Leading Edge Press & Publishing, ISBN 0 948135 31 X. It is available for £7.75 (including post and packing) from RDS Sales, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN. Make cheques payable to RD5.

#### LOCAL ACTION

#### North West

By Robert Cummings

Olympian task: The failure of Manchester's Olympic bid has cast doubts on a number of exciting rail infrastructure projects including a rail loop around the city centre and a light railway through East Manchester to Ashtonunder-Lyne. A successful bid would also have secured the go-ahead for vital electrification works between Manchester and Blackpool as well as on the Liverpool-Manchester-York route and Metrolink lines to Salford Quays, Trafford Park, Oldham and Rochdale. The branch will be keeping up the pressure to ensure these vital projects commence. Officials from BR, local authorities and Manchester Airport have been urging the Government for loan guarantees to allow work to start on a south facing curve for the highly successful airport line before parliamentary powers expire.

Premier problem: News of the Government's failure to award its £150 million leasing concession to the desperately underfunded West Coast main line has angered local rail users and politicians. This decision is particularly upsetting when, at the drop of a hat, millions can be found for a motorway to run alongside the existing M62 which will destroy 362 homes and blight thousands more. Campaigners have promised the Government a battle that will make Twyford Down pale into

Fare puzzle: A new Merseyrail electric service started running between Liverpool and Chester with the winter timetable, reducing journey times and cutting out the need to change on to a diesel shuttle at Hooton. While Merseyrail has reduced fares on the route, passengers on the Wirral lines travelling beyond Liverpool on Saver tickets have been faced with fare rises of up to 25% (Port Sunlight to Manchester increased from £7.90 to £9.80). It is assumed this is an accountancy exercise designed to bolster the finances of the Merseyrail electric services - about the only North West lines to attract any private

Useful: The branch has helped form a new rail user group for the lines to Marple and New Mills from Manchester. The Goyt Valley Rail Users Association is affiliated to the RDS and can count on forty plus members after only one public meeting — at which RDS leaflets were freely available. We hope to give a helping hand to a second group, formed in Mossley after speculation that the station would be closed because of low platforms. Though it would appear that this is not the case, we believe there is enough interest to form a users group on the line which links Manchester Victoria and Huddersfield.

#### Scotland

By Douglas Smart

Subsidised cars: The All Change document produced by Central Regional Council promoting a switch of funds from road to public transport was an excellent example for other regional councils to follow. At least that's what we thought. Sadly we have now had to tell Central it might as well tear up All Change. Central decided to shelve the muchvaunted reopening of Stirling-Alloa as soon as ScotRail said it could not afford its contribution. But Central went ahead with a £3.4 million car park for Stirling which required a £15 per head contribution from local government taxpayers. Cost for the project has already gone through the roof. We have told Central that car parks should not be subsidised by taxpayers.

Let's be fair: We have also called for safety improvements at level crossings to be paid for by road users because it is stupid, lawbreaking motorists who cause the problems.

Protest now: I urge everyone to phone the Scottish Office hotline, 0345 741741, to protest about the office's obsession with roads at the

Write on: An expert analysis of the railway scene, including a prediction of impending disaster caused by privatisation, was provided at a branch meeting by The Scotsman's Allan McLean, the only transport correspondent in Scotland. The other papers have motoring correspondents. He pointed out that all the men who make decisions on transport do so from the back of chauffeurdriven motor cars.

#### South West

By Gerard Duddridge

Tender touch: The new station for Ivybridge (population 9,357) and district is set to go ahead. Devon County Council has put the associated construction work out to tender for commencement in December this year. The plans suggest that it will be at Rutt Lane on the far east side of the town. Only 41% of the town will be within a mile of the station, as Dartmoor to the north and the A38 trunk road to the south have dictated an east-west elongation to the town's growth. The branch suggested the old goods yard site to bring 86% of the town within one mile of the station, but it appears that health and safety criteria relating to the track cant and platforms rule this out.

Promotion: The county is promoting the new Exe Vale station on the Exmouth branch in Exeter, to be built near the M5 motorway junction and Sowton industrial estate. A Sunday service on the Exeter-Okehampton line, as a prelude to a full commuter service. is being considered. It is also examining the feasibility of reopening Cullompton (Exeter-Taunton) and Kingskerswell on the Paignton branch, a route which might see its trains extended to Goodrington (where land is available for park and ride) and perhaps even Churston to serve Brixham two miles away, a town twice the size of Ivybridge.

Bridging the gap: Another welcome developmust be the completion of the footbridge across the river Dart, to Totnes, to give access from the BR station to the preserved Buckfastleigh line.

Cost penalty: The long-planned diversion of the Newquay branch from the Luxulyan. route, to bring it direct to St Austell on upgraded/rebuilt mineral lines via St Dennis Junction-Burngullow is unlikely to take place. Health and safety requirements relating to the line in the vicinity of the china clay pits have forced up costs.

Scope for improvement: Devon and Cornwall escaped the savage rail cuts this winter. But problems remain, such as the absence of evening and Sunday services on the Looe and Newquay branches. Even from Exeter, thereis no winter Sunday service towards Plymouth and Exmouth until after midday.

· RDS envelope re-use labels are available with the slogan: For Cleaner Air, Go by Rail, £1.80 per 100 post free from RDS Sales, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN. Cheques payable to Railway Development Society.

#### And now for some more good vs on reopenings Thornton, Hornbeam Park, Pontyclun, service the line has already given and its

By ALAN BEVAN

This year's RDS national draw raised £1,500 for the national reopenings campaign. We will be spending the money carefully to ensure that more stations reopen in future.

Following the success of our reopenings conferences at Nottingham and Maesteg, we will be holding another at Clitheroe on 4 June. Full details in the next Railwatch.

Despite the way the Government has starved the railways of cash while lavishing it on new roads, 15 stations did reopen in 1992-3. They were Bentley, Featherstone, Pontefract Tan-shelf, Streethouse, Pencoed, Glenrothes with Castle Street, Maesteg Ewenny Roa Tondu, Garth, Wildmill and Whifflet.

Sixteen more stations have reopened reopen) in 1993-4: Adwick, Hucknall tead, Manchester Airport, Gretna Kirkwood, Bargeddie, Bailieston, Vernon, Carmyle, Maryhill, Sum ambbill, Possil Park, Ashfield, Per Digby. In the New Year, we will tell y another 30 or so stations opening in 19

A report from Leicester City Council sets out

will provide an opportunity to high rate of return is an impressive 70%.

importance to today's transport infrastructure. Many other lines celebrate their 150th next year. A little historical research could give user groups an ideal opportunity for publicity.

 New Futures for Rural Rail conference at York on 28 January. Details from Paul Salveson, Transnet, 6 School Lane, Berry Brow, Huddersfield HD4 7LT. Phone 0484 665273.

the substantial cost benefits of traffic calming. Next year the Norwich to Yarmoutl £1 million has been spent on 74 streets, saving Reedham celebrates its 150 year anniv £680,000 a year in accident costs. The annual

### LOCAL ACTION

#### East Anglia

By Nick Dibben and Trevor Garrod

Marathon event: Thanks to Peter Lawrence and his band of helpers the branch was able to have a daily presence at the 10-day Norwich Rail Event held at the city's Castle Museum. The organisers commented favourably on our stand which, in showing the future potential of our railway system, contrasted with the nostalgic flavour of the other stands.

All change: The change to a joint Liberal Democrat/Labour authority in Cambridge-shire following the county council elections has resulted in a much more positive approach to rail issues. The county council has agreed to support winter Sunday services on the Cambridge to Ipswich and Royston lines for the first time. They are also investigating the proposal in the branch's Rail Strategy to reopen the line to Wisbech and build a new station at Soham.

Maltings meet: The branch annual meeting will be at Ely Maltings on Saturday 26 February. A speaker from Regional Rathways has been invited.

Privatisation: In recent months, the Government has been trying to reassure those concerned about service cuts following privatisation by stating minimum service levels will be based on the existing timetable. Such statements are however misleading. Branch secretary Nick Dibben wrote to his MP John Major, asking if these service levels were guaranteed throughout the length of the franchise. The reply from John MacGregor confirms that they are not, and that the Franchising Director may approve service reductions. Since many people feel that pri-vatisation will increase the cost of running services, and that the Government will be looking to reduce the money it spends on the railways, there could be considerable pressure on the Franchising Director to accept cuts. It is essential that there are guidelines issued which detail the conditions under which cuts could be made. Such guidelines must be made public before any franchises are awarded.

Rescue package: Cuts in Sunday services on rural lines in Norfolk and Suffolk have been largely averted, thanks to a £60,000 package from the county councils and several district councils. RDS has also contributed a token £40 out of its Rail Defence Fund towards this sum, to encourage richer bodies to give more. We hope local members and visitors will use these trains. It means, for example, that you can have a Sunday afternoon in Sheringham by train or a Sunday trip from Lowestoft or Yarmouth to London. The all-line timetable does not show all the trains because it had to go to print before the deal was finalised, another sorry comment on the way in which Government cuts in grant force panic

measures on the railways. However, the local press printed the timetables in full and BR management has responded to public pressure by reintroducing full timetable leaflets. RDS general secretary Trevor Garrod was interviewed on Radio 4's Today programme and on BBC Radio Norfolk about the threatened cuts.

Questions: Members are reminded to return to the branch secretary the questionnaire enclosed with the November issue of Rail East as this will help us plan activities next year.

Positive talk: A well-attended branch meeting in Norwich on 25 September heard an entertaining and thought-provoking talk by Murray Brown, editor of the magazine Reil. He highlighted many positive things about British Rail, such as the much better Chiltern Line service following investment of £70 million.

#### Wales

By Chris Magner and Guy Hardy

Hearty talk: Welsh Secretary John Redwood, Public Transport Minister Roger Freeman and Brecon and Radnor's Tory MP Jonathan Evans travelled on the Heart of Wales line and were reassuring about the line's future. Many of the stations along the line are in beautiful condition, with large paintings of steam trains, commemorating the 125th anniversary of the opening of the line. A special steam-hauled excursion ran on 9 October hauled by two ex-BR standard tank locomotives. At Llandovery where the official celebrations took place, the town crier and BR Wales managers met the train. Many local people were in Victorian dress. The Ammanford silver band played on the platform which was decorated with bunting and flowers. Speed restrictions on the line will be lifted as soon as money allows, said Theo Steele, director of Regional Railways, South Wales and West.

Bustitution: Shropshire County Council provides a weekday rail replacement bus service following timetable cuts on the Heart of Wales line from five to four trains per day. Replacing trains with buses is not acceptable.

Rails for ramblers: This summer's Heart of Wales Rambler Sunday specials did well, and so did the connecting bus to the Elan Valley. From October to June there will also be special rambler trains on the Heart of Wales, Cambrian and Shrewsbury-Chester lines on alternate Saturdays. Experienced people will lead the walks which are timed to arrive in good time for return trains. Powys County Council and the Ramblers Association have helped the scheme and a leaflet is available from BR stations or ring 0743 860069 (Ramblers Association).

Girls intitiative: Moreton Hall School is doing well running Gobowen ticket office and travel

national campaign to reopen Whittington station raised £1,300 in two weeks. More cutbacks: InterCity has said it will cut back the 125 Milford Haven-Paddington

centre, with receipts up on last year. The RDS

More cutbacks: InterCity has said it will cut back the 125 Milford Haven-Paddington service so it will stop short at Carmarthen next spring. The Mayor of Haverfordwest and Pembrokeshire. Rail Travellers have roused local people and the media to protest.

Barmy buses: We are trying to persuade Crossville Buses to retime their Trans Cambria service so it connects with trains at Llandrindod Wells. The bus leaves one minute before trains arrive from both directions!

Keep track: West Glamorgan County Council has been advised by the branch to protect the trackbed of the Pontardulais-Gowerton line.

Cashing in: Restoration of ticket barriers at Cardiff Central during peak hours has yielded £1,000 a day extra takings.

Swanline: Planning difficulties have delayed the start of construction at some stations for the new Swansea-Bridgend local services which are to be called Swanline.

Port line: Substantial EC funds are to be used to revamp port facilities at Fishguard and a third sailing is to be provided to Rosslare. It is to be hoped Regional Railways will provide a connecting train. Irish Rail also wants a train ferry for Channel Tunnel traffic.

Meet: The branch annual general meeting will be held on 12 March.

#### North East

By Gordon Barclay

Direct action: Improved journey times between Cleveland and Tyneside resulted from the introduction in October of the new direct Saltburn-Darlington-Newcastle service with Leyland-Barclay class 153 single cars.

Rail fan: The public meeting organised by RDS in Hexham attracted over 80 people, mainly local rail users. Despite early claims by Tory MP Peter Atkinson that he was a fan of rail travel, he seemed more interested in building yet more roads. He also criticised the French for squandering money on new highspeed lines. He urged us to have faith in his Government's plans and the future of the railways. But John Bourn for RDS raised many points including the complexity of ra privatisation compared to other privatisations. Mr Atkinson's faith did not seem to be shared by the audience. A straw poll at the end of the meeting failed to find a single person in favour of the privatisation plans. Three were undecided, the rest were hostile.

Meet: The annual general meeting of the branch will be on 26 March at the Swallow Hotel, Newgate Street, Newcastle upon Tyne.

#### Wessex

By Peter Argent

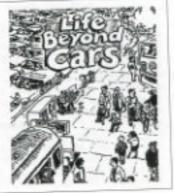
Network shuttle: Network SouthEast is considering a 20-minute frequency of service between Southampton and London Waterloo from next May following the launch of the InterCity Shuttles.

Listening corner: The branch attended a privatisation seminar in Southampton addressed by Public Transport Minister Roger

Private plea: In its submission on the draft regional planning guidance for the South West, the branch urged the Department of Transport to concentrate on securing funds from developers for rail facilities.

#### Life Beyond Cars

An RDS booklet explains how your lifestyle does not have to be dominated by the infernal combustion engined machine. £2.25 including post and packing from Alan Harwood, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN. Make cheques payable to RDS.



#### **LOCAL ACTION**

#### Lincolnshire

By Brian Hastings and Paul Jowett

Rail times: RD5 took a full page advert in the excellent 25p rail times booklet produced by the county council. Regional Railways pocket timetables however were missing when the new timetable came into force in October and Sleaford has no local leaflet.

Shocking cuts: We backed a protest lobby to Transport Secretary John MacGregor following the disastrous cuts to Lincoln's rail services in October which made it the worst-served tourist city in Britain for Sunday trains. The city lost its Nottingham, Sheffield and Cleethorpes trains and is supposed to make do with four trains to Grantham. What's worse, some "connections" entailed a 64-minute wait. What was an hour's journey to Nottingham is transformed into a 2½ hour ordeal. It seems a shame that BR treats the county so badly when the county council is so supportive of rail.

Slow signal: The threatened Gainsborough-Barnetby route has been reduced to a oneday-a-week operation. Signal boxes are closed from Sunday to Friday and open up for one 12-hour shift on Saturday. The Brigg and Gainsborough Rail Development Group (contact Phil Hewson, 16 Willowbrook Drive, Brigg, South Humberside DN20 9JA) plans a leaflet drop to publicise what is left of the service. The train now takes 14 minutes longer because line speeds and maintenance have been cut by Regional Railways North East.

Political action: Cleethorpes Borough Council has been alerted by local RDS campaigner Mike Savage to the Brigg route cuts and the axing of a Sunday Newark-Cleethorpes service. Mike also accompanied Grimsby MP Austin Mitchell in November to see Regional Railways Central director Mark Causebrook to call for improvements particularly to connections with InterCity at Newark.

Stop that: Regional Railways has agreed to stop the 10am ex Sheffield at Kirk Sandall, Hatfield, Thorne South and Crowle to make up for the loss of the axed 9am train.

Thanks for nothing, John: Transport Secretary John MacGregor overruled RDS objections to approve the closure of Elsham and Brocklesby stations. As a result, their last Pains ran on 2 October.

Encouraging: The branch contacted every member of the county's planning and transportation committee and all new councillors

#### Trek to the Train

Robert Griffiths was shocked by changes in his home city of Stoke-on-Trent which made it more difficult for people to get to the railway station. Then he started looking at other cities and towns and discovered that Stoke was not unique. This booklet shows how the planners have gone wrong. This 12-page RDS publication is available for 75p post free from Alan Harwood, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 ODN. Make cheques payable to RDS.

offering support for rail initiatives. Membership secretary David Harby reported an encouraging response.

Concern: Whether it was a conversion on the road to Damascus or a gradual realisation that the public wants its railways, MP Edward Leigh wrote to Public Transport Minister Roger Freeman expressing concern and public disquiet over cuts to Sunday trains at Market Rasen and Gainsborough. The Tory MP for Gainsborough and Horncastle is asking Mr Freeman to intervene to restore the trains. The reason for the cuts of course is the Government's action in reducing the public sector obligation grant.

Learning curve: The former East Holmes goods yard seems set to become the site of Lincoln's forthcoming university. Ideally situated near the city centre, it will be close to the station.

Meet: The branch annual general meeting will be on 5 February at Friends Meeting House, Lincoln, 10 minutes walk from the station. Likely starting time 1pm.

Threatened stations: Cuts to stopping trains have been disastrous for places like Thorpe Culvert and Hubberts Bridge. We are worried that this is an underhand way to stop people using the stations so they can be closed a few years hence. We are recommending a realistic spread of stopping services.

#### Yorkshire

By David Pickersgill

Window of opportunity: The campaign to reintroduce passenger trains on the Knottingley-Doncaster freight line and reopen stations at Norton and Askern is gaining momentum. Local people have formed a working group which is now undertaking a survey of 1,000 homes. Evidence from the survey will be used to lobby both South and West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executives and British Rail. Diesel trains displaced by electrification to likley and Skipton could provide the window of opportunity for the line which would plug the gap to provide a rail service to Leeds and Doncaster.

Waiting for £Im: Another longer running reopening campaign, for Elland and Brighouse, continues despite repeated setbacks. The scheme is currently stalled for want of £1 million capital funding.

Costly mistake: The cost of providing local rail services will rise next year and again the year after "as a consequence of privatisation", Mr Roy Wicks of West Yorkshire PTE told a meeting in Brighouse.

Second hand sparks effect: Network SouthEast cast-off units will provide the service to Ilkley and Skipton once the electrification is complete. But let's be positive. Thirty-year-old electric trains are better than no electrics and will represent a huge improvement on the current Pacers.

Cars on trains, yes: Hopes are growing of a siding connection into the new BMW car import centre at Thorne North to allow Channel Tunnel flows of new cars direct from Germany. Site meetings have already been held.

More cuts, no: A public rally at Snaith on 29 October was warned of the likelihood of further cuts on the Leeds-Goole line. The meeting was organised by Selby and District Rail Users group and Snaith Rail Users.

Air line: The new TransPennine service to Manchester airport is doing well, so much so that it cannot be long before more of our rural services, like Settle-Carlisle and Sheffield-York have their timetables pruned to provide additional units. The overnight services are a particular boon, particularly to concert and club goers as well as air travellers. Stansted please take note.

#### West Midlands

By Alan Bevan

Euro Electras: The Channel Tunnel class 373 train emerged from the Metro-Cammell Washwood Heath works for trials in mid October. The 18 coaches and two electric locomotives were taken by diesel engines via Tamworth and Wichnor to Lichfield high level for the test runs on the recently electriced Sutton Coldfield line. The new class 323 electric trains for the cross-city line were also starting to appear and Centro has named them the Electras.

Backtrack: Tracks were being relaid in November westwards from Snow Hill to bring trains back on the old Great Western route for the first time for 20 years. The full four-mile route to Smethwick should be open to passenger trains in early 1995.

Make way: Passengers have protested after Railfreight forced Centro to remove two midday Cannock line passenger trains from October to make way for merry-go-round coal trains which do not start running until the new year.

Cheap cheap: Escalating estimates for the cost of a new platform at Rugeley Town have prompted a new search for a cheaper solution for extended services to Hednesford.

Back in action: Arley tunnel in North Warwickshire was scheduled to reopen in November after months of major repairs.

Freight hopes: Decisions are awaited on the possible development of the Hams Hall power station for a Channel Tunnel freight depot.

On line: Suggestions for new stations and new train services on the Nuneaton-Coventry-Leamington line are being considered by consultants funded by Warwickshire and Centro.

International Air: InterCity has decided to shelve the idea of a Heartlands station for Birmingham. It is also being asked by West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority to consider changing the name of Birmingham International to Birmingham Airport, partly because unwary passengers bound for New Street get off there by mistake. InterCity may not concede. What do readers think?

#### Books by post

High Speed Trains - Fast Tracks to the Future 19,99

The Line that Refused to Die (new and updated edition) £7.99

Britain's Railway. The Only Transport for the Future, all-colour coffee table book £5.74

Birdwatching by Train £6.70

All prices include post and packing.

Make cheques payable to RDS.

Other books can be ordered through RDS, Send orders or an SAE for a list to Sales Officer Alan Harwood, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN

## WESTMINSTER

#### Tube investment

There has been a substantial investment in modernising the London Transport Central Line in recent times. Elsewhere on London Transport we all know of defective stations, said John Marshall (Con, Hendon) on 26 July.

On many routes, he said, the rolling stock is old, uninviting, graffiti ridden, and often rather dirty. In fact the first impression of London for overseas visitors was based on the Northern and District lines; they would not return to, for example, the US saying that London was a modern city.

In Autumn 1992 the Government cut investment in

Keith Hill (Lab, Streatham) said that hundreds if not thousands of his residents in the Clapham and Ballsam districts of Streatham rely on the Northern line stations of Clapham Common, Clapham South and Balham for their day-to-day travel needs.

Speaking as a member of the Select Committee on Transport, he confirmed that the background is that of persistent long-term decline in the quality and efficiency of our transport system in London, gross overcrowding on our rail and underground lines and at our

But congestion and an inadequate public transport system brings problems and formidable costs as well. The implications of neglect of our transport infrastructure for London's already precarious economy are both dire and well attested.

in the 1992 autumn statement, .ondon Underground's capital budget was slashed by 30% an immediate result of which will be the delay until 1998 of the full upgrading of the stations at the southern end of the Northern line. More alarming still was the fact that the Underground investment programme would mean a delay in the modernisation of rolling

the Northern line until the year 2005 - 10 years away. That is if the modernisation ever takes

As Mr Denis Tunnicliffe, Managing Director of London Underground, has said: What a way to run a railway! The London commuter is being forced to pay the price of the government's economic

mismanagement.

The Government would have a chance in the Budget of committing a sustained and higher level of funding. Few would deny that London's transport system is in a poor state, said Tony Banks (Lab. Newham NW). That is to acknowledge that it has been underfunded for years.

"The last Labour GLC declared its intention to invest heavily in capital projects in London Transport. 'The Conservative government of the day used various devices to block our

Mr Banks said one needs to look at the position today to see how the Government has let London down badly.

#### Modern metro

There was a time, Mr Banks added, when we thought that the Government, changing its mind, realised how important it was to invest in an efficient transport system for the capital city: it would be to the benefit not merely of London but the whole economy

Just before the 1992 General Election, in the 1991 autumn statement, the Government made a commitment to provide investment to meet the target of a "decently modern metro". The Government safely won the election of April 1992, having promised new projects such as CrossRail and the Jubilee Line

Such projects are often quoted by the Government when it talks of record sums of investment for future years. Construction has not even begun. Having safely won the

statement is crucial to what is happening to London Underground in particular. In November 1991 the then Secretary for Transport had pledged the necessary vestment and said that by 1993-94 London Underground investment in the existing railway should be more than £700 million a year. It had not worked out that way. Trams come back 'I remember travelling on

to renege on all of their

promises. The 1992 autumn

exactly the same trains that run today, when I made the journey from my school at Kenningtom Oval to Tooting," said Mr Banks. The stations also seemed remarkably the same. Trams were running in those days. He did not know whether

the Minister was old enough to remember trams and trolley buses. "I was a babe in arms at the time, but I still remember them and much deplore their

Trams had their guaranteed road space, and no one got in the way of one of those great clanking vehicles. Introduced in their place were unenforceable bus lanes. But now Croydon is considering a tramlink, and there are trams in Manchester and Sheffield.

Trams are making a comeback. They never left some continental cities. The government got transport planning badly wrong. London and other cities have suffered as a consequence.

#### The debate on privatisation

The Government announced on 28 October that it would accept the Lords amendment allowing BR to bid for franchises. Transport Minister Lord Caitliness said: "The Government accepts that there might be circumstances in which it might be appropriate for BR to be a

'But the Government remains of the view that it would not be appropriate to treat BR in the ame way as other potential franchisees."

He said the Government would table its own amendments to restrict BR's right to bid. Labour's Lord Clinton-Diwis accused Transport Secretary John MacGregor of sleight of hand and trying to subvert the will of the House of Lords. Liberal Democrat Lord Tordoff

asked if it was intended to make BR the franchisee of last resort. On 1 November, the Government announced that it would give only two days for consider 470 Lords amendments. Then the Transport Secretary said the discussion would also be guillotined. Labour deputy eader Margaret Beckett (Lab Derby 5) said cutting the time for debate was a constitutional outrage because the Bill had been fundamentally re-written since it was last in the Commons, She told ministers: You're a gutless bunch. You know there is no support for this Bill in the country or the House, and you've run away from it."

#### Gerrymandering \_\_\_

Labour transport spokesman Brian Wilson (Cunninghame N) said: "The body of opinion outside the Commons will be that this discredited legislation is being rushed through by people who fear debate on these matters.

He said the opposition objected to the way the measure was being altered "right up to the eleventh hour in the 59th

At Prime Minister's Question

Time, Doug Hoyle (Lab Warrington N) told Mr Major: The imposition of a guillotine on the Railways Bill is an affront to democracy that has caused disquiet not only on this side of the House but on his benches as well because it will curtail discussion on such vital subjects as pensions, railcards and the British Rail bid for franchises and it will be seen by the public as a cheap, gerrymandering attempt to get an unpopular measure through this House. Mr Major denied it was a negation of democracy. Former Tory Leader of the House John Biffen (Con., Shropshire N) said MPs should not have to despatch this extensive and contentious legislation in two days. Backbenchers should stand up for their rights. Before the guillotine was announced, Mr Simpson said the "rail fragmentation" being brought in by the Government would reportedly need next year's annual grant to the railways to be almost doubled to

This phenomenal increase in taxpayers' subsidy would not go towards developing our railways but towards paying for the gargantuan additional costs inherent in rail fragmentation

EDITED BY JACK ELLIS,

Pathetically few

and privatisation. The proposed level of grant is far in excess of what has ever been given to British Rail. If British Rail were given an annual grant of £2 billion, nobody would be talking about privatising the railway. We would be boasting like our continental neighbours of how good our state railway is." As it was, "not a single extra to enter the scene? train would run, not a single

WATCH

the cost of rail privatisation. Madcap Nick Harney (Lib Dem, Devon N) said the Government had earlier talked of holding back the floodgates of private sector interest in the railways. There is virtually nobody powing any interest whatever in coming in. This whole madcap plan for privatisation is now dependent on management-employee buyouts. The Government is against which new entrants to flogging a dead horse," the railway will and can be judged.

extra passenger would be

carried." It would go towards

He said the guillotine was another example of Government incompetence, like the poll tax. He said: "If they didn't railroad things through in such an arrogant way, they wouldn't have to come back to put right their own mistakes. It's little wonder that we are already hearing rumours that the Government is realising that the Bill before us is technically incompetent and that another Bill may have to be brought

#### Contemptuous

back in the next session to clear

up some of the loose ends."

Brian Wilson was contemptuous the deal "stitched up" with stential Tory rebels to get the Bill through. He said: "What we are left with now is a total contradiction. Yes British Rail will be allowed to bid but only if the Franchise Director can find nobody else to bid against them and if he can, British Rail will be sent off into undignified retreat as the operator of last resort.

That is not fair competition. It is a rigged perversion of competition. It is deeply contemptuous of British Rail and its workforce.

"It is also deeply contemptuous of the British taxpayer because what the Secretary of State is saying is that even if BR is the most effective potential bidder, in fact especially if BR is the most effective potential bidder against a private interest, then BR will be excluded from competing to clear the way for that private bidder."

Keith Hill said the real truth was that virtually no interest was being shown in the proposed

"Isn't the Government trying to exclude BR in order to make it easier for the pathetically few private bidders, however expensive and however inefficient they are likely to be, Former public transport minister David Mitchell (Con. Hampshire NW) said if BR were to bid, the private sector would be frightened off. He regretted that the Lords had amended the Bill to allow BR to bid. Tim Rathbone (Con, Lewes) said: I particularly welcome the requirement on the Franchising Director to promote competition for franchises. I hope Mr MacGregor will confirm that in most cases this will require the inclusion of BR in the bidding process, to promote competition, and to provide the benchmark

#### Gradualist

Gary Waller (Con Keighley) said he welcomed the fact that the Government had not gone for a big bang".

"It has gone for a gradualist approach. As time goes by, the benefits of this legislation will become clearer. But John Prescott (Lab, Hull E) warned: "We believe it should

be a public sector railway. We want people who believe in a publicly owned system running public railway system." Public Transport Minister Roger Freeman said: "We are talking about the management and staff of BR, either alone or in conjunction with other private sector companies, joining to bid for franchises. BR would not be allowed to bid in all circumstances.

He said no decision had been taken on the financial regime for Railtrack. It would be decided after the Budget. His boss John MacGregor said the

Government now accepted that BR should have the right to bid for franchises.

#### Discretion

But he added: "The Franchising Director may exclude BR from bidding but only when he considers it to be desirable to do so in the interests of promoting management and employee bids, in promoting competition for franchises, of encouraging new entry into the industry or of

preventing or reducing market dominance in the provision of passenger railway services." The Franchising Director would have discretion in deciding whether BR should bid. John Prescott also attacked the Government over the British Rail pension fund. He said: "The Government is attempting to rob pensioners of their rights

and their pensions." He said ministers had reneged on the terms for safeguarding

"More time is needed for debate because the Bill had been radically altered in the Lords. We are not wasting time. It is an issue which affects 250,000 pensioners and railway workers. It is about money that is in their funds which the Government has no right to claim but is about to attempt to claim - on the second anniversary of the Maxwell swindle of pension funds. This is an issue of the Government breaking its word. This is an issue of deliberate deceit. The guillotine is

#### Bus Company was broken up. £150 million had gone straight

Treasury.

of a dishonest government."

designed to cover up the actions

He said that when the National

from the busines's fund into the

Precedent "It is not a new precedent to pinch from the pension funds. They've already done it with National Bus. They are already starting to do it with the rail and it is a matter of judgment as to whether you can believe the Secretary of State's word that they are not intending to do that."

Glenda Jackson (Lab Hampstead) and Highgate) criticised the lack of guarantees and the lack of time given by the Government for debate She said many BR pensioners now believed the initials BR no longer stand for British Railways but for Bank Raid. Joint Heppell (Lab, Notts E), a railway pensioner, said the Government had no right to take part of his pension and put it in the Treasury.

The Government has made it clear that their intention all along is to take my money. This Government talks about competition and privatising but what they've done is nationalise my pension." John MacGregor dismissed the

Labour arguments as

On 3 November, the House of Lords made the Government panic by insisting that BR should be allowed to bid for franchises on the same basis as private companies. But Lonf Peyton also warned: "It is a poor Bill likely to have some very bud consequences and will create a great deal of muddle and confusion."

#### Arrogance

Former BR chairman and transport minister Lord Marsh said: BR management will be left with no purpose except to supervise its own decline and the decline of rail services. To do that by accident would be disgraceful. To do it deliberately out of sheer arrogance is near criminal." The Lords defeated the Government three times and insisted that the Commons had another look at the Bill. Then however the Government turned up the pressure on its backbench MPs, took out its top hats in a bizarre ritual which also saw some MPs putting handkerchiefs on their heads John Prescott said: "This controversial rail Bill, this arrogant Government, this incompetent Secretary of State has reduced this Parliament to a rupning farce today. He added: "The Lords are trying. to protect the pockets of the taxpayer. The whole purpose of privatisation is to take public money and put it into private pockets." Brian Wilson said: "The Government has lost the argument. Rail privatisation is discredited. Now the Government will have to live with the consequences of its actions - at a series of

#### Waiting

elections.

The Commons eventually sent the Bill back to the Lords who were kept waiting so long that they adjourned until the next

Unfortunately, the Lords, despite the fact that 83% of the population did not want this Bill to go through, decided not to obstruct it further because they did not want to provoke a constitutional crisis. The Bill received royal assent on 5 November.

STUART McNAIR AND LLOYD BUTLER -

## '25 years late' Jubilee line

The biggest development in Europe — around London's Canary Wharf — is at last to get its own Tube line.

The Government decision in October to give the go-ahead to the Jubilee line extension comes four years after it was given another go-ahead by the Government - and 25 years after London Transport deposited the first Bill

The four-year delay alone is estimated to have cost £300 million in taxpayers' money.

It has taken that long to winkle a promise of £400 million out of financiers picking over the body of the collapsed property empire which built Canary Wharf. Large amounts of this "private" capital though is in fact coming from the public European Investment Bank.

As ever, the Government shows remarkable sleight of hand but it is not an encouraging example of its policy of insisting on the private sector helping to fund new public transport projects. If new roads were subjected to similar tests, few would ever be built.

As it is, Britain's most expensive new road the notorious £255 million one-mile long Limehouse link which also serves Canary Wharf - has already been built entirely with taxpayers' money. By comparison, the Gover-nment's contribution of £1.5 billion to the 10mile long Jubilee extension is superb value.

The danger now of course is that the Government will try to escape its responsibility to fund CrossRail (which is much more important than the Jubilee line) and a whole string of other vital rail projects.

CrossRail will make a real contribution to easing congestion in London, both on the rail system, particularly the Central line, and on the roads. By comparison, the Jubilee has a limited value.

We must demand money is spent on sensible rail projects before one penny more is wasted on widening London's M25 orbital motorway. No more four-year or 25-year waits!

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- \* British Rail Research is now prepared, at a price, to help with computer simulations of new railway proposals, new stations and light rail proposals. RDS branches and user groups are unlikely to be able to afford this but local authorities can. Contact: Roy Hartle, PO Box London Road, Derby DE24 8YB. Phone 0332 264661. Fax 0332 264913.
- \* If you know of cycle hire facilities near stations, please contact RDS cycle officer Malcolm Conway at 58 Greengate Lane, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 5LL (phone 0539 726285)



A long way to go: The first British-built 13.6 metre curtain-sided swap body is transferred from a road vehicle to a rail wagon at the Trafford Park exhibition. This is one of 12 to be supplied by European Intermodal Products to International freight company Hay Pollock

### Making the freight connection

The lack of conventional rail wagons was noticeable at the Freightconnection 93 exhibition in October. The emphasis this year at Trafford Park Euroterminal, Manchester, was on swap bodies and containers.

Roadrailer (Bimodal) Ltd showed their new Tautliner trailer. Three box-van Roadrailers and rail bogies were also on display at Salford. This equipment is being tested at present by the Transport Development Group between Coatbridge, near Glasgow and Stratford, East London.

Crane and fork lift makers gave demonstrations of how efficiently swap bodies and containers could be handled.

One of the most impressive exhibits was the new five-unit covered car carrier. Each set is 66 metres long, double decked and has an overall roof which rises with the sides, high into the air to facilitate loading.

When closed, the roof hooks over end doors, making it impossible to tamper with the contents.

Probably the best located stand inside was the

RDS freight committee. All the new proposed freight terminal sites seemed to be represented including Daventry, Hams Hall, Doncaster and Mossend.

The associated conference heard the £400 million investment in Channel Tunnel services described by lan Brown, managing director of Railfreight Distribution.

There was scepticism when Public Transport Minister Roger Freeman spoke about the future of rail freight after privatisation.

Most experts believe the Government has lost an opportunity to expand rail freight. A vast amount of freight has recently been lost to road and it will be difficult to win it back.

Private companies will need encouragement to come in and because Railtrack will charge firms what the market will bear, there will be no incentive for operators to cut costs. Nor will Railtrack have an incentive to cut costs.

The Rail Freight Group held a press conference in London just after the show to warn that the three large regional companies the Government plans to create would be monopolies and prevent new entrants who will also find it virtually impossible to operate trains through the Channel Tunnel.

- Next year's Freightconnection exhibition will be held at Royal Victoria Dock, London, from 4-6 October. For details: 0543 419600.
- Local councils worried about the effects of falling freight traffic and privatisation on the Newcastle-Sunderland-Middlesbrough route have commissioned Arup Transportation to carry out a development study.
- Railtrack, Eurotunnel and 23 other bodies are paying £60,000 for a study into intermodal transport, including piggy-back.
- The Pedestrians Association of 126 Alders gate Street, London EC1A 4JQ has launched an advice and information helpline number called WalkWays: 071 490 0750.

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General Secretary: Trever Garrod, 15 Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Sulfolk NR32 1RQ (Tel 0502 581721)

Administration: Reg Snow, 48 The Park, Great Bookham, Leathorhood, Surrey KT23 3LS (Tel 0372 452853)

Sales: Alan Harwood, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middx TW11 0DN

Press officer: David Pickersgill, 171 Lower Oxford Street, Castleford, Yorkshire WF10 4AQ (Tel 0977 510909)

Publicity officer: Roland White, Latymer, The Drive, Balmont, Survey SM2 TDJ (for free publicity less

embership Secretary: Elisabeth Jordan, 13 Amhill Road, Gratton, Corby, Northants NN17 3DN, Membership: Eto per year; pensioners, students and unemployed E5, user groups and perial councils E10; other local authorities E50, companies E40. Families E1 extra per member, after E10.

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