

# SRUBLUK

## The Society for the Reinvigoration of Unremunerative Branch Lines in the United Kingdom The Branch Line Reinvigoration Society

### PROGRESS REPORT - MARCH, 1960.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. The Annual General Meeting of SRUBLUK will take place at -

FRIENDS' HOUSE, EUSTON ROAD, LONDON N.W.1,

on SATURDAY, 30 APRIL, 1960, at 2:45 pm.

Will all members make every effort to attend.

The Agenda will be forwarded with the April Circular.

PROGRESS REPORTS. This month for the first time the Progress Reports appear in a brighter form, with the heading in Green (the SRUBLUK colour) instead of the sombre black that has been used hitherto. We hope that this change will meet with the approval of members.

### NEWS OF THE BRANCHES.

We have been advised by Mr. Hipperson of Cheltenham that the Chipping Norton - Kingham service would be best left in its present form, in view of the special requirements of the blanket factory, and of the paucity of other passenger traffic. SRUBLUK's examination of this branch will be shelved, therefore, for the time being.

Official confirmation has now been issued of the withdrawal of the local service from Honeybourne - Cheltenham, which we forecast in our last issue.

Recently we referred to the uncertain future of the steam operated branch lines in Kent, including the Gravesend Central to Allhallows-on-Sea line. The line will be retained as far as Stoke Junction Halt, and to Becht, for workmen's trains to and from Grain Oil Refinery.

Mr. S.W. Jackson has mentioned the report that the Horsham - Brighton and the Horsham - Guildford lines will in due course change over to Diesel traction. As there seems to be some confusion regarding the future of these lines, perhaps it will be better if we set out the present position of these two lines, as little has yet been announced officially. The present position is as follows -

Horsham - Brighton - (a) Hourly interval service (as on the East Sussex Lines) has been introduced which will be followed in due course by - (b) Introduction of diesel traction on this route, to be followed in due course by -

(c) Electrification. The provisional date for electrification is stated to be 1966. Forsham - Guildford: An hourly interval service (followed by dieselisation) will take place on this line too, but at a date further in the future. There is as yet no plan for this latter line to be electrified.

One of our members, Mr. Adrian Smith, of Chelmsford, has enquired whether the reciprocity between SRUBLUK and the various Preservation Societies means that membership of SRUBLUK automatically carries with it membership of the other Societies with which SRUBLUK co-operates. We are sorry to say that it does not. Membership lists are not exchanged, although it might well be a good idea if they were! Our co-operation is on the technical side - we exchange information, ensure we do not duplicate the effort of other Societies, and arrange for delegates from the other Societies to attend our Committee Meetings whenever possible, and so on. In this way, SRUBLUK and the other Societies concerned cover a considerable canvas, ensure that there is no duplication, and help each other as far as possible. If however members feel that they would prefer the co-operation to go further in the membership field, the forthcoming Annual General Meeting would be a suitable occasion to raise the matter.

It may surprise members to know that we have quite a few members in Portugal. The doyen of them - Mr. A.W. Smith, of Loures, Portugal, has forwarded us two photographs of the line from Alyth Jct/Ardler to Dundee via Newtyle and Lochee. The views are of just south of Newtyle Station, and depict one length of rail lifted out of the chairs, and laid at the side. Mr. Smith inquires of the reason for this singular procedure, and suggests that there might be some legal reason. He is quite right! It is provided for, in the Regulation of Railways Act, that it is an offence for a member of the public to interfere with the permanent way in any way, or to obstruct it. The original intention of the act was to restrain persons from taking up a length of track in an endeavour to derail a train, or to obstruct the passage of a train. Unfortunately, the E.T.C. are now using the Act for a purpose never intended in the original act, and are taking action of this nature on a route where the service has been withdrawn, as a device to prevent any railway preservation society making a bid for the line, and taking it over, as are the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society, in another part. In the same way that it is an offence for an unauthorized person to break the route, it is also

an offence for an unauthorised person to restore it, and by keeping the route broken, the B.T.C. has succeeded in a number of cases in claiming that the route "no longer exists" because part of the permanent way has been lifted! We leave to the members to consider the mentality such action indicates exists at Headquarters.

Mr. Proctor. of Shaffield, has taken the B.T.C. to task for publishing misleading claims regarding the demotion (as he puts it) of the Great Central services, and has a long letter published in the Nottingham Guardian, on the subject. Too often the claims of the B.T.C. remain unanswered, and give the public <sup>the impression</sup> that the Commission are always right. If members who see an opportunity in their area to sail in to the attack wish to act, the Committee are very pleased to help them with facts, or will take the matter over.

The Guillebaud Report which has been very much in the news, will have significance for SRUBLUK, too. We feel that it is bound to be used by the B.T.C. as a lever and an excuse to close more branch lines, and possibly without offering the sop of "alternative facilities". We hope that members will formulate their opinions on this matter, and bring them forward at the Annual General Meeting next month.

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