

S R U B L U K

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

The Branch Line Reinvigoration Society

PROGRESS REPORT - OCTOBER/NOVEMBER, 1960.

KENT REINVIGORATION PARTY. This function took place very successfully as arranged, with visits to the Grain, Hawkhurst and Westerham Branches. The press were met at Gravesend and Paddock Wood and travelled with the party to Grain and Hawkhurst respectively. Some of the regular travellers on the Hawkhurst Branch were met and the future of the line was discussed. Reports of the party appeared in several newspapers, giving valuable publicity for the Society.

A SRUBLUK member has agreed to act as the Society's representative in the fight to save the Hawkhurst Branch.

CHRISTMAS CARDS. SRUBLUK Christmas Cards are on sale again this year. They have a M. & G.N. Tank Engine and train printed in red on the front with a seasonal greeting inside. The price will be 4d each (postage 2d) or 4 cards for 1/- (postage 4d). Postage will be free on orders of 1 dozen or more. Please send orders as early as possible to:-

Mr. J. Barfield, Central House, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2.

ACTIVITIES OF OTHER SOCIETIES.

Great Eastern Electric Railtour. The London and Fome Counties Electric Traction Society are running a railtour on November 20th to enable the N.E. London Electrification to be inspected on the day prior to the commencement of public service. The train, which will depart from Liverpool Street (platform 4) at 12:35 pm, will cover the lines to Bishops Stortford, Hertford East and Chingford, and will finish with a run from Liverpool Street to Stratford via the recently electrified "Cambridge Line" between Bow Junction and Stratford. The tour will include calls to inspect the new station at Harlow Town and the rehabilitated stations at Theobalds Grove and Southbury on the Southbury Line. (This line is, of course, being re-opened with the electrification). The continental type lifting barrier gates at Ware will be inspected.

The fares (including itinerary) are 16/6 (children 8/9). Applications should be made to the London and Fome Counties Electric Traction Society, 31, Atheldene Road, Earlsfield, London S.W.18.

South Devon Railway Society - Special Attraction Weekend - Advance Announcement.

A series of events of railway interest are being arranged by the South Devon Railway Society for the weekend of 4 March, 1961, to coincide with the Society's Annual General Meeting. On Saturday there will be a conducted tour of Newton Abbot Motive Power Depot, a brake van trip on the Teign Valley Line, and a film and colour slide show. On the Sunday a coach tour will be arranged which will include a visit to the Haytor Granite Railway. Further details will appear in the next Progress Report or can be obtained from Mr. E.G. Parrott, 5 Old Mill Road, Chelston, Torquay, Devon.

RECENTS PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL INTEREST.

The Lake District Enquiry. An independent 6-man committee is being set up under the chairmanship of Mr. D. St. John Thomas to enquire into the Lake District Railways and to consider their future. The railways covered are to be west of a line between Carnforth and Carlisle. Interested parties are asked to submit written evidence. SRUBLUK has written to this Committee pointing out that the closure of these routes virtually would cut off the Lakes from the industrial centres around, besides having a detrimental effect on the tourist traffic and increasing the number of vehicles on the roads.

Public Meeting. It is hoped to organise another public meeting in London in the early months of next year. Efforts are being made to find a suitable speaker and an announcement will follow later.

NEWS OF THE BRANCH LINES. Objections are being made by the local authorities, industries, and parish councils regarding the proposed closure of the Colne Valley line from Chappel and Wakes Colne to Eaverhill in Suffolk. Business men and councillors at Falstead, the largest town served by the line, claim that the line would quickly justify itself if a better service were provided. They fear that closure would nullify plans to attract more population and industry to the town. Sudbury Town Council have heard from British Railways Eastern Region Traffic Manager that he proposes shortly to submit a case to the Transport Users Consultative Committee for the proposed withdrawal of passenger facilities between Long Melford and Bury St. Edmunds.

The line from Saxmundham to Aldburgh has been much in the news lately. The proposal to close it was considered on September 13th by the T.U.C.C. who have recommended to British Railways (E.R.) that it should be kept open for five years

and its fate decided at the end of this period. This is owing to the opening of an atomic power station near Leiston, which as was stated at the hearing, would result in approximately 1000 extra people pouring into the town daily, enough to fill 28 35-seater buses.

The B.T.C. claim that by closing the line they would save £9000 per annum. Proposals to lessen the cost of running the branch were agreed and partly carried out in 1956. This included the running of only one train on the line, doing away with the signalling, and the operation of the gates at three crossings by the driver or guard. This method, which had been suggested as a last resort, would add 9 minutes to the journey time between Leiston and Aldeburgh. These proposals would save about £5233 per annum (An estimate of remarkable precision! - Ed.).

Most members will have heard by now that the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway has been purchased by the Preservation Society for £12000 at a recent auction. The line will continue to be operated by the present eight members of the staff, but volunteers will probably be asked for to help in maintenance and improvement.

Macduff Town Council are seeking the support of the M.P. for Banffshire in their fight to save the freight only line between Turiff and Macduff.

Bala Urban Council have urged the provision of more frequent services on the Ruabon to Parmouth line. The closure of the Bala to Blaenau Festiniog line has severed the only direct public transport link from the eastern area of the county to the north, now necessitating a journey through Dolgelly of twice the distance.

Local authorities in the Chesterfield Area will be represented at a meeting called in the town to discuss British Railways' proposed closure of the Nottingham (Victoria) to Sheffield line to local passenger traffic.

We hear from Mr. L.G.Hipperson that the morning and evening bus replacing the recently closed rail service between Uppingham and Seaton is thoroughly unsatisfactory. For Seaton residents it is useless as there is no return service.

The Editor will be pleased to hear from any member who has any news regarding the proposal of closure of the following Western Region lines:-
Yatton to Wells, Taunton to Yeovil, Redditch to Ashchurch.

Chairman:- Mr. C.F.Manley, 42 Hillsborough Court, London N.W.6.

Membership Secretary:- Mr. J.F.Groves, 46 Stonepark Avenue, Beckenham, Kent.

Editor:- Dr. M.P.L.Caton, 10 Grosvenor Gardens, Uppminster, Essex.