

SRUBLUK

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

The Branch Line Reinvigoration Society

PROGRESS REPORT - FEBRUARY/MARCH, 1961.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.

The Annual General Meeting will take place on Wednesday 26 April, 1961, at 7:15 pm in Room 17, Friends' House, Ruston Road, London N.W.1. Members are asked to make every effort to be present. A copy of the Agenda is enclosed.

SUBSCRIPTIONS - A REMINDER.

Those members who have not yet paid their 1961 subscriptions are asked to send it as soon as possible to the Membership Secretary whose address appears at the end of this Report; 10/6d, or 6/- if aged under 21 on January 1st.

REINVIGORATION PARTY - FEBRUARY 25th.

This party took place as arranged on the Hatfield-Dunstable-Leighton Buzzard and Northampton-Bedford-Eitchin branches and gave an excellent opportunity for seeing these lines in operation. The Party was well attended and was a considerable success.

A meeting was held on the Station at Leighton Buzzard with representatives of the Leighton Buzzard and Linslade Joint Transport Committee which represents a number of local Councils and is concerned about the possible closure of the line to Dunstable. A useful and interesting discussion took place regarding the future of the line and it was suggested that a more frequent service should be provided with through trains from Bletchley to Dunstable. The matter is now being studied by the SRUBLUK Committee.

Reporters from local papers were met at Dunstable and also at Bedford at which the aims of SRUBLUK and the purpose of Reinvigoration Parties was explained to them; as a result the Party has been reported in the Press including a group photograph of several of those taking part.

COLNE AND STOUR VALLEY RE-INVIGORATION PARTY.

As mentioned in the last Progress Report, a further Reinvigoration Party has been arranged for Saturday, June 10th. The Stour and Colne Valley Branches in East Anglia will be visited and the schedule appears overleaf.

Liverpool Street		dep 10:30 am	
Colchester	arr 11:41 am	11:47	(Via Long Melford)
Faverhill	12:56 pm	2: 3 pm	
Halstead	2:29	3:46	
Chappel and Wakes Colne	4: 1	4: 5	
Colchester	4:21	4:27	
Liverpool Street	5:43		

A party fare of 21/9d (10/11 if under 14 years) has been arranged and those intending to go are asked to send their remittance to the Membership Secretary, 46 Stonepark Avenue, Beckenham, Kent, as soon as possible. The party will meet at Liverpool Street Station at 10:0 to 10:15 am. Further details will be given in the next Progress Report or can be obtained from the Membership Secretary.

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION - PUBLIC MEETING.

We have pleasure in announcing details of a Public Meeting which is being held by this Association on Thursday April 6th at 7:15 pm in the Lancaster Room of Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W.1 (three minutes' walk from St. James's Park Station). There will be two talks:

- Mr. B.D.J. Walsh on "The Case for Railways", and
- Mr. C.F. Rowe on "The Work of the R.D.A."

Time will be allowed for questions and discussion. Mr. Robert Aickman, a Vice-President of the Association will be in the Chair. This meeting will no doubt be of interest to all SRUBLUK members.

RECENT PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL INTEREST.

6olne Valley Line.

SRUBLUK has submitted an official objection to the Transport Users Consultative Committee in connection with the closure proposals for the Colne Valley Line from Chappel and Wakes Colne in Essex to Faverhill in Suffolk. The objection emphasised that this line serves an area with a total population of over 20,000 which is expected to increase very considerably in the near future. A community of this size required an adequate rail service and it was suggested that the passenger service should be more frequent, preferably of an even interval nature, and with better main line connections. It would then attract much more patronage. The present service (four to five trains a day in each direction) is too infrequent to appeal to most people. Possible operational economies which would help to reduce the deficit, such as reducing stations to

unstaffed halts, were suggested. If the line is closed, all passenger traffic from the area will have to go by road and the disadvantages of this form of transport were pointed out.

The case for the closure was heard by the T.U.C.C. at Ealstead on February 14th and again on February 21st. There were a large number of local objectors. A member of the SRUBLUK Committee was present and he supported the SRUBLUK written objection and also made enquiries about the figure given by the B.T.C. for the annual passenger receipts for the line. This was in order to find out whether this included bookings made from stations outside the branch and not just those made on the branch itself. SRUBLUK has heard of cases on some branches where the ticket sales have not been credited to the branch but entirely to the booking station; in this case, however, we were assured by the B.T.C. representative at the hearing that all such bookings were included in the figure quoted.

In connection with opposing this closure SRUBLUK has been grateful for the help and advice given by Mr. S.L.T. Crawford, Secretary of the Ealstead and District Chamber of Trade. An objection was also submitted to the T.U.C.C. by the Chamber of Trade which included a detailed account of the need for an adequate rail service for the area. It included the suggestion that the B.T.C. should consider the operation of two or four car diesel trains from Colchester, (St. Botolph's), as this station is nearer to the main shopping centre than the North Station, through to Cambridge; breaking them into one or two car sets at Chappel and Wakes Colne with one section travelling on the Stour Valley Line via Sudbury, and the other section travelling on the Colne Valley Line via Ealstead. The sections could rejoin at Faverhill to complete the journey to Cambridge and in this way a regular interval service could serve the whole area.

On March 14th the T.U.C.C. met in private to discuss the closure but did not reach a final decision and will meet again in April to discuss the proposal further.

Chester-Denbigh-Ruthin Line.

The Chester-Denbigh-Ruthin Line is now being considered for closure and a Train Users Association has been formed to meet this threat. Anyone using the line regularly is advised to write to the Secretary of the Association, Mrs. H. Targett, Dolwen, Clwyd Avenue, Denbigh, and give details of name, home address,

place of work and number of times the journey is undertaken.

SRUBLUK have communicated with the Association and have offered to give any assistance in fighting the closure. This has been gladly accepted and the matter is receiving the attention of the SRUBLUK Committee.

NEWS OF THE BRANCHES.

The expected withdrawal of the passenger service between Long Melford and Bury St. Edmunds is to take place on and from Monday April 10th.

We understand that the Westerham branch has had a reprieve and is not to close. Members will remember that this line was included in last year's Reinvigoration Party. The Hawkhurst line, however, also visited on this occasion, is to close from June 12th.

The only remaining service on the Kent and East Sussex line, a freight only service between Robertsbridge and Tenterden, will also be withdrawn from this date. We hear from Mr. M.J.Parnell that three school boys plan to form a Preservation Society for this line.

Several M.P.'s are supporting the campaign of the Great Central Association to oppose the closure of sections of the Great Central Railway. The Association, which claims that the L.M.Region intends to withdraw all passenger services between Aylesbury and Sheffield, recommends the introduction of fast Diesel trains stopping at all stations including those now closed. Operating economies such as the abolition of booking offices and porters at stations, are also suggested by the Association.

We hear from Mr. L.Fipperson of threats to two more Western Region branches. It is proposed to withdraw the passenger services between Oxford and Fairford and to terminate the line at Witney and it is also feared that local passenger services on the Cheltenham to Kingham branch will be withdrawn. The latter line provides the shortest route from Cheltenham to London, and the only practicable route from Cheltenham to Oxford.

We hear from Mr. C.Clark that the Eastern Region proposes to withdraw certain stopping passenger services between Doncaster and March and to close all the intermediate stations on this route except Gainsborough, Saxilby, Lincoln, Sleaford, and Spalding.

It is proposed to close the Bedford to Northampton line. The management claim that only 78 persons were using the line daily but a recent census showed

the figure to be 305 and this was taken when college students normally using the line were on holiday!

Freight services were withdrawn from the Bala to Blaenau Festiniog line at the end of January. Members will remember that passenger services were withdrawn just over a year before.

There is local concern that if the threatened closure of the Bewdley to Woodcorton line takes place, closure of the Severn Valley line from Bewdley to Shrewsbury would follow.

The N.E. and N.W. Transport Committees have reconsidered the case of the Barnard Castle to Fearith line and have now recommended closure.

The withdrawal of passenger services between Rugby Midland and Leicester London Road is now proposed with complete closure between Rugby Wharf and Wigston South.

The line running along the foreshore between Swansea Victoria and Gowerton which links with the Mid-Wales Line might close by the end of the year. Traffic for Mid-Wales and the North would then be operated from Swansea High Street and reach the Mid-Wales line via Cowerton (North), Llanelly, or Carmarthen.

An interesting survey of public opinion has been carried out by the South Devon Railway Preservation Society in the area served by the Totnes to Ashburton line which closed to passenger traffic on November 1st, 1958. The survey was conducted between Mid-December, 1960, and late January, 1961, and revealed that the people missed the trains and that the buses caused much dissatisfaction. Out of 66 persons interviewed, 47 were former passengers of the line and the same number said that they would use the service again if it were ever reinstated. 10 of the 66 said that the closure had caused them considerable inconvenience and a further 17 experienced some inconvenience. The effect of the closure on rail travel in general was shown by the fact that 25 of those interviewed use all rail services less often.

Closures of individual stations are as follows:- Carn Erea (W.R.), from January 2nd; Notton and Royston, and Winterset and Ryhill, (N.E.R.): ALSO from January 2nd. It is proposed to close Moss Side and Wrea Green on the Preston to Blackpool Line.

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