

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, JUNE/JULY, 1961.

COLNE VALLEY REINVIGORATION PARTY.

This party took place on June 10th as arranged, with visits to the Stour and Colne Valley Lines. After travelling to Colchester by the 10:30 am train from Liverpool Street, the party took the diesel railcar via the Stour Valley to Eeverhill where a meeting was held with the Chairman of the Urban District Council. The Council had apposed the closure of the Colne Valley Line and was anxious that the service should be retained.

After lunch at Eeverhill the tour continued via the Colne Valley Line to Halstead where the party was welcomed at the station by representatives of the local Chamber of Trade. After a short look at the town, members enjoyed tea and refreshments at the Bull Hotel by kind invitation of the Chamber of Trade. An interesting and informative discussion took place in which the Chairman of the local Council took part. The need for the retention of the Colne Valley Line was again emphasised and it was agreed that, if given a reasonable service, the people would support the railway.

The party then travelled on the remainder of the Colne Valley Line and returned to Liverpool Street via Colchester. A reporter from the East Anglian Daily Times travelled with the party and as a result an excellent account of the day's proceedings appeared in this newspaper on the following Monday.

The latest position regarding the future of the Colne Valley Line is that the Central T.U.C.C. has been unable to accept the proposals of the East Anglian T.U.C.C. that it should remain open and we are sorry to say that closure will probably take place in the near future. This decision is extremely regrettable particularly as there are now plans for the possible future increase of Halstead to a population of sixty thousand.

As we go to press we hear that a joint protest committee formed by the local councils has decided to ask the Minister of Transport to receive a deputation in the hope that he would accept the recommendation of the East Anglian T.U.C.C. and allow the line to remain open. If the Minister refuses

to receive the deputation the decision to close the line may be challenged in the House of Commons.

WESTERN REGION REINVIGORATION PARTY.

As announced in the last Progress Report, the next Reinvigoration Party will take place on September 2nd, visiting the Abingdon, Fairford, and Thame branches.

The schedule is as follows:-

Paddington	dep 9:18 am	Fairford	arr 1:29 pm
Radley	arr 11: 4		dep 1:50
	dep 11:10	Oxford	arr 3: 3
Abingdon	arr 11:15		dep 4:45
	dep 11:54	Thame	arr 5:23
Radley	arr 11:59		dep 6:15
	dep 12: 4 pm	Princes Risborough	arr 6:30
Oxford	arr 12:12		dep 6:55
	dep 12:18	Marylebone	arr 8: 2

A party fare of 29/2d (14/7 if under 14 years) has been arranged and those intending to go should if possible send this in advance, enclosing a stamped addressed envelope, to Mr. J. Parfield, Central House, Finsbury Square, London, E.C.2. The party will meet at Paddington station between 8:45 and 9:0 am at Platform 1 at the foot of the steps leading to the centre overbridge.

RECENT PROCEEDINGS OF THE COMMITTEE OF GENERAL INTEREST.

Letter to Dr. Beeching.

The Chairman of S.R.U.B.L.U.K. has recently written to Dr. Beeching, in order to put forward the Society's case, emphasising the need for the continued existence of branch and secondary lines.

Cheltenham to Kingham Line.

Following the recent S.R.U.B.L.U.K. Survey of the Cheltenham to Kingham Line three suggestions have been submitted to British Railways for their consideration, as detailed in the last Progress Report. In their reply, British Railways pointed out that the passenger service on this line will be completely revised in September consequent upon the revision of the Main Line services and consideration will be given to S.R.U.B.L.U.K. suggestions regarding the need for better connections at Cheltenham to and from South Wales and Birmingham; regarding the idea that special cheap day fares on the line be augmented and better advertised, the Railways consider that the present arrangements are adequate. They have, however, adopted our suggestion regarding the need for direction indicators to Stow on the Wold Station and have applied to

the local council for permission to erect two such signs,
Hertford.

A joint committee has been set up between S.R.U.B.L.U.K. and the R.D.A. to study the railways in the Hertford area. The committee has recently visited the area and is seeking support for the possible re-opening of the Hertford to Hitchin Line. Further reports will appear in due course.

S.R.U.B.L.U.K. Survey of the Leicester to Rugby Line.

As mentioned in the last circular, a S.R.U.B.L.U.K. sub-committee has recently carried out a survey of the Rugby to Leicester lines. The Committee visited the area on May 17th and travelled on three trains between Rugby and Leicester on the Midland Line and one on the Great Central.

Passenger loading figures were noted on the Midland route and the trains were found to be well patronised. Two trains carried on an average of thirty to forty passengers, and the third, the 2:10 pm from Rugby was never carrying less than fifty and finished its journey with over one hundred.

Twenty one passengers on the Midland Route were asked for their views on the adequacy of the train service, eighteen of whom expressed satisfaction and only three had complaints. In contrast, only two passengers interviewed considered the alternative bus services to be adequate, fifteen expressed dissatisfaction and four were unaware that the bus service existed.

Seventeen passengers on the Midland Branch were asked how they would be affected by the closure of the line, and of these, thirteen said that they would be greatly inconvenienced, one a little inconvenienced, and only three would not be inconvenienced at all.

In view of these findings the decision to close the line is a most retrograde step.

Midland and South Western Junction Line.

A member of S.R.U.B.L.U.K. attended the recent T.U.C.C. hearing regarding the future of this line. We regret to say, however, that the Central T.U.C.C. has approved the closure proposals.

Bedford to Hitchin Line.

S.R.U.B.L.U.K. has been in correspondence with a local councillor in connection with the closure of the Bedford to Hitchin Line and a S.R.U.B.L.U.K. member attended the recent hearing by the East Anglian T.U.C.C. The T.U.C.C.

have, however, recommended closure. British Railways claim that the annual saving from withdrawing the service will be about £10,000. This would be reduced to about £5,000 if the system of guards on the trains issuing and collecting tickets were to be adopted. (£5000 does not seem a lot to pay for the maintenance of a public service - Editpr).

Bedford to Northampton Line.

The case for the Bedford to Northampton line is to come before the T.U.C.C. on August 1st. Unfortunately S.R.U.P.L.U.K. has been unable to obtain permission to attend the hearing as no members are resident in the area, but assistance has been offered to local authorities in preparing their case.

Annual General Meeting.

At the recent Annual General Meeting it was agreed to ask members to write in and let the Committee know whether they would prefer the Annual General Meeting to be held on a weekday or a Saturday. It will be much appreciated if members will do this so that the Committee can arrange the Meeting to suit as many members as possible. A form for this purpose appears at the end of this circular.

PROPOSED S.R.U.P.L.U.K. TOUR OF SCOTLAND.

In view of the possibility of the closure of large sections of the railway in Northern Scotland it has been suggested that a S.R.U.P.L.U.K. tour be arranged for the Summer of 1962 in order to visit as many lines in this area as possible. Arrangements are very tentative at present but the tour would be planned as a holiday. Anyone interested is asked to communicate with Mr. G.E. Croughton 27 Tolmers Gardens, Cuffley, Herts. Suggested dates are Saturday June 16th to Saturday July 1st and a provisional itinerary would include travel over most of the railways in the Aberdeen and Inverness Areas and the far North together with lines serving Oban, Ballachulish, and Fort William.

SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE LOCOMOTIVE CLUB TOUR.

The South Bedfordshire Locomotive Club are running a tour on Saturday September 16th covering the line from Luton (Bute St.) to Hertford (Cowbridge). The fare is 10/6d (5/3 under 14 years) and should be sent to Mr. J.F. Crossman, 20 St. Monica's Avenue, Luton, Beds., enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. All are invited.

NEWS OF THE BRANCHES.

We hear from Mr. L. Fipperson that the Ashchurch to Upton on Severn branch is to close from 14 August. A small consolation to users of this line is that Ashchurch will be renamed Ashchurch for Tewkesbury; but we hear that this new name seems to have upset the pride of the local inhabitants. A meeting of local councils has agreed unanimously that an effort be made to bring about the reopening of the Ross on Wye to Monmouth and Chepstow to Monmouth lines, to passenger traffic.

The Bewdley to Woolferton line closure will take place from July 31 and will include complete closure of the Woolferton to Tenbury Wells section. Woolferton station will also close. A service of one passenger train in each direction, Mondays to Fridays, will, however, continue to operate experimentally for a period of one year between Kidderminster and Tenbury Wells. We hear from Mr. M.J. Parnell that two M.P.'s are backing a plan by five businessmen to operate the line by private enterprise.

The suggested closure of wayside stations between March and Doncaster may take place from September 11 and many wayside stations between Peterborough and Grimsby will take place on the same date.

More cheerful news is that we understand that it has been agreed to reopen the station at Fiveways between Birmingham (New Street) and Redditch.

The section of the Teign Valley line between Christow and Trusham has now been closed to all traffic and all that remains of this line is the freight only section between Heathfield and Trusham. The stations at Ashton and Christow are up for sale.

Mr. J. Smith of 247 Repton Road, Cringiton, Kent, is interested in forming a Preservation Society for the Hawkhurst branch.

British Railways have under discussion a plan to close the Kings Lynn to Funstanton line to passenger traffic on Sundays from November to March. It has been denied emphatically that this is a "thin end of the wedge" to closing the line altogether, as traffic at other times is quite adequate.

We hear that the Path to Radstock line is being considered for closure. This is an important cross-country route and the threat is to be viewed with concern. More details will be applied for.

The Worth Valley line between Keighley and Oxehope is being considered

for closure by the T.U.C.C. on July 25. This line was given a reprieve in June 1960 and a diesel service introduced but this has not made the service economic.

The Central T.U.C.C. have approved finally the closure of the Barnard Castle to Penrith line but fourteen M.P.'s have tabled a motion in Parliament urging that the line be kept open.

As we go to press we hear the alarming news of the proposed closure of rail services in the South Wales Valleys. Full details will be sought immediately but it appears that closure would include the Newport - Blaenavon, Newport - Brynmawr, and Aberbeeg - Ebbw Vale lines and leave only six stations in Monmouthshire open to passenger traffic; such sweeping closures affecting such an important industrial area have (not surprisingly) aroused tremendous local opposition, and the proposals are to be fought by a co-ordinated effort by the County Council and numerous local councils.

Chairman and Editor:- Dr. M.P.L.Caton, 10 Grosvenor Gardens, Upminster, Essex.

General Secretary:- Mr. J.W.Barfield, Central Fouse, Finsbury Square, London E.C.2.

Membership Secretary:- Mr. C.J.Polkinghorne, 20 Ridge Crest, Enfield, Middx.

To the Chairman,
S.R.U.P.L.U.K.,
10 Grosvenor Gardens,
Upminster, Essex.

I would prefer future Annual General Meetings to be held on a Saturday afternoon/ weekday evening. (Delete as appropriate)

Additional remarks,.....
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NAME (IN CAPITALS) _____

Address _____

Date _____