

# A VOICE FOR RAIL USERS



**RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY**

**60p**

### EDITOR'S NOTE

In 1978, Michael Caton, Graham Collett and I produced a modest Guide for Rail Users' Groups in just 100 copies.

This booklet went through two subsequent editions, and we think it can be said to have contributed to the growth in rail users' organisations over the last six years.

Certainly, Railway Development Society Branches and rail users' groups have gained much experience, and learned much from each other, during that time; and in presenting this new booklet I acknowledge the help and experience of people from many users' groups up and down the country.

Thanks are also due to John Barfield, for his advice, and to Richard Watts, Ray Davies, Peter Warner and Steve Wilkinson for help or contributions on specific points.

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## I WHY RAIL USERS NEED A VOICE

British Rail carry 2 million passengers every day, using 16,000 trains over 11,000 miles of route. Each year, over 19,000 million passenger miles are travelled. Of these, 9,000 million are on nationwide Inter-City services; 7,500 million in London and the South East; and 2,600 million on other provincial services (branch lines, secondary routes, provincial suburban services, main-line stopping trains.) In addition, millions of passengers are carried on London Transport and the Underground systems of Glasgow and Tyne & Wear.

Britain's rail network suffered drastic cuts during the 1950's and 1960's, but remained remarkably stable throughout the 1970's. However, investment over the last decade has stagnated. Indeed, between 1975 and 1981, British Rail's investment ceiling, set by the Government, dropped from £518 millions to £430 millions (at 1982 prices). We spend less public money per head of population on our rail system than any comparable European nation.

Such investment funds as have been available have been concentrated on principal Inter-City and freight services - a policy that was quite understandable, for these are the services on which such resources can be expected to produce the greatest obvious returns.

However, this policy meant that, for 15 years, no new diesel railcars were built. British Rail's 3,000-strong fleet of diesel multiple units, dating from the 1955 Modernisation Programme, is rapidly nearing the end of its useful life. BR's limited resources for publicity, building new stations and improving old ones, modernising signalling systems, has also had to be concentrated on Inter-City main lines. Users of the delightfully-named "Other Provincial Services" have all too often had to be content with ageing, rattling diesel railcars, decaying stations (often unstaffed) and obsolescent equipment.

Yet provincial services feed traffic into Inter-City routes - and the decline of the former can weaken the viability of the latter. Not that our Inter-City services are perfect. Much has been achieved by High Speed Trains and imaginative marketing initiatives; but, in this "Age of the Train" only one fifth of BR is electrified - a lower proportion than any comparable industrial country in Europe.

In 1982, rail users suffered because of lengthy disputes between BR management and unions. 1983, according to Sir Peter Parker, BR's Chairman, would be "Watershed Year" for the rail network - if decisions were not taken on investment, the network could go into steady decline.

What happened? 1983 saw three different Secretaries of State for Transport. The first, David Howell, approved every closure proposal put to him yet only half of one electrification proposal. The second, Tom King, barely had time to come to grips with the job before being moved elsewhere in the wake of the Cecil Parkinson affair. The third, Nicholas Ridley, announced a £184 million cut in Government payments to BR, within a short time of taking office; and stated that, while he was against "major" cuts and closures, he did accept "maybe the odd route here or there."

Where could these "odd routes" be? Could one of them be yours?

Any route kept in operation by public money - as are over 100 lines from Aberystwyth to Lowestoft, from Barnstaple to Bishop Auckland - is vulnerable.

Even main lines can be at risk, especially if structures on them become due for repair or renewal. The main lines from Settle to Carlisle and Goole to Gilberdyke (part of routes from West Yorkshire to Scotland and from Doncaster to Hull) were threatened with closures early in 1984.

The Serpell Report of January 1983, outlining a series of increasingly draconian rail cuts options, was the latest of a number of warnings of what could happen to this, the country that gave railways to the world, if adequate support and investment is not forthcoming.

Urgent steps are therefore needed to give a strong voice to users of these services - particularly for secondary lines but also for at least some Inter-City routes.

Road users, and vested interests which benefit from road construction and usage, are organised in bodies like the AA, RAC and Road Haulage Association, co-ordinated by the British Roads Federation, described by one former Transport Minister as "probably the most vociferous lobby I have met during my years in this House."

Rail users need a similar lobby. What is there?

A growing and independent voice for rail users is being provided by the national RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY and more than 100 local RAIL USERS' GROUPS.

RDS was formed in October 1978 by the merger of the Railway Invigoration Society and Railway Development Association, with a total membership of just under 500. By the end of 1983, it had more than doubled in size to 1,200, with 9 regional Branches and Area Representatives covering all other parts of the country.

In the early 1970's, rail users' groups were limited to commuters' associations mainly in the London area; a few groups which had successfully fought closures in the 1960's, continuing a more or less active existence in case they should need to fight again; and a handful of recently started campaigns for the promotion of particular services.

The late 1970's and early 1980's saw a steady growth in users' groups - often set up on RDS initiative. More than 40 new ones were formed, in such places as Barnstaple, Skegness, Walsall, Whitby, Cromer, Redditch, Matlock, Bedford, Ormskirk, Penistone, Hexham, Lytham, Aylesbury, Newark, Yarmouth, Sudbury, Llandrindod Wells, Stowmarket, Wrexham, Welshpool, and Knaresborough.

In 1980, the first national conference of rail users' groups was organised by RDS. These conferences have become annual events, addressed by leading figures in the railway world.

Users' groups, and RDS Branches and Areas, co-operate with, and learn from, each other, building a voice for users independent of BR management and unions and of political parties, willing to work constructively with any of these bodies of people but also not afraid to criticise them if their action (or inaction!) is considered to be against the interests of the travelling public.

All this work is voluntary. As yet, neither EDS nor any users' group is in a position to employ staff - unlike many better known pressure and interest groups. But we hope that time will come, as we grow in size and in influence.

This booklet aims to give a taste of what campaigners have achieved so far; to encourage them to try out new ideas; and to stimulate users' on lines where there is no rail users' organisation to go out and form one.

Bon voyage!

## II HOW TO SET UP A GROUP

### a. Calling an inaugural meeting.

Probably the easiest way to set up the group is to get a few interested people together and then call an initial meeting to which the local press, relevant local organisations (Trades Councils, Chambers of Commerce, amenity groups, ratepayers' and residents' groups, conservationists, Women's Institutes, the Tourist Board (s) in the area, etc.) The Rail Unions, representatives of the Local Authorities, British Rail bus operators, and voluntary bodies would be invited.

Long speeches are not necessary at a meeting of this type but experience has shown that two or three short talks (say, fifteen minutes each) go down well.

Try for a permutation of two or three of the following:

1. A member of British Rail Area or Divisional Management, to speak on the services and facilities at present on the line, problems of promotion, operation etc., and what they would like to see happen.
2. A representative of an existing rail users' group, to describe their experiences and achievements.
3. A representative of the Railway Development Society, to explain the work of the national organisation with which, hopefully, the local users' groups would find it useful to work.
4. A well-known local figure interested in retaining and developing the line. This could be the local Member of Parliament, or a local County or District Councillor; possibly a prospective parliamentary candidate or the Chairman of the County Council's Transport Committee.

One of these people could chair the meeting, or another individual could - but, if at all possible, the Chairman should be a local person.

A suggested Agenda is as follows:

- a. Chairman's welcome.
- b. Apologies for Absence.
- c. Speakers.

- d. Questions and discussion.
- e. Motion: "That this meeting agree to set up a .....Users' Association."
- f. Consideration of Constitution (a sample constitution is attached as Appendix A.)
- g. Election of Officers and Committee.
- h. Motion: "That the minimum annual subscription be (50 pence) for individual members and (£1) for organisations."
- i. Future activities.
- j. Any Other Business.

The proposed constitution should be duplicated and put out on seats beforehand, not simply read out by the Chairman. The meeting may decide to adopt it provisionally, and leave it to the Committee to "dot the i's and cross the t's". Certainly, one should avoid sinking into a quicksand of constitutional wrangling at the inaugural meeting!

#### B. Preparing for the Meeting.

Prior to holding the meeting it is a good idea to arouse local interest by conducting a survey of local opinion, through the distribution of a questionnaire to organisations in the line's catchment area. This proved very useful in the setting up of the North East Norfolk Travellers' Association, South East Lincolnshire Travellers' Association, and Bedford - Bletchley Rail Users' Association. A sample questionnaire is attached in Appendix B.

Other possibilities include leaflets at stations, letters to the press or an exhibition in the local library. (The RDS East Anglian Branch is willing to lend its exhibition to interested people elsewhere.)

Local railway men should also be approached, as they often take a keen interest in the running of their local line.

If you know one or more regular commuters on the line they should be asked if they would be prepared to circulate leaflets on the train.

#### C. Subscriptions.

As many people as possible should be encouraged to take an interest in their local rail service(s).

Therefore, unless there is a wealthy benefactor willing to fund most of the group's activities, it is advisable to have a subscription, which should be kept fairly low. It is better to have 100 members paying, say, 50p each, than only 50 paying £1 each. Many of these members need not be expected to play an active

part; but it is important for a group to show that it represents a sizeable body of people. At the time of writing, the cheapest known subscription is 50 pence, while £1 is charged by a considerable number of groups. Usually it is stressed that this is a minimum subscription so that individuals who can afford to pay more are encouraged to give an additional donation.

Users' groups usually encourage local businesses, Councils and voluntary bodies to join as corporate members, at a somewhat higher rate of subscription. Some groups give a discount if subscriptions are paid for two or three years at a time, e.g. 60 pence a year or £1.00 for two years, since this saves the membership secretary some work. Certain groups also find Family Membership advantageous (e.g. 60 pence per individual, £1.00 per family).

### III PROMOTING A SERVICE

The more a rail service is used, the stronger the case for improving it - and so most users' groups see promotion of the line as a major aim.

Possible publicity media are:

1. Display of Posters - advertising the rail service, in suitable locations in the area. Local authorities can help by arranging for their display in libraries, council offices etc., as well as on council notice-boards at suitable roadside locations. Traders and interested individuals can also display them on their property. This is of particular importance in towns or villages where the railway station is not centrally situated and so posters on display on the station building or platforms may be largely "preaching to the converted".

The Romford - Upminster Line Group in Essex, for example, prepared a poster of their own, which was modified by British Rail to suit their requirements and is now produced by them in two sizes - a large one for notice-boards and a smaller one for use in the libraries etc.

The Sudbury - Marks Tey Rail Users' Association has produced an attractive illustrated poster to advertise itself and its local line (urging "Use it - don't lose it") and displays this, together with a leaflet dispenser, in libraries, offices, shops and similar places.

Another possible site is on British Rail land where, for example, a line crosses a major road, or even a minor urban road, but where there is no station. Sometimes British Rail may be willing for the users' group to maintain the board themselves, renewing the posters where appropriate. This is done by the East Suffolk Travellers' Association at three locations in Culton Broad and Beccles. NDS also produces an A4 size poster with the slogans "Use Your local line - Join Your local Rail Users' Group." This is available at 10p per poster (minimum order 5) from Mr. F. Hastlow, 21 NORFOLK ROAD, SUTTON COLDFIELD, WEST MIDLANDS, B75 6SQ.

Sometimes a local council, particularly at Parish or Town Council level, is willing to display information about the service on its Notice-Board.



2. Distribution of Timetable Leaflets - in the line's catchment area. These could either be produced by the Group, or the Group could distribute leaflets produced by British Rail (possibly with some assistance from the Group). The Wickford-Southminster line Group in Essex has found that they can be conveniently distributed to households by enclosing them with the local rate demand. In tourist areas, hotels, restaurants etc., are the obvious places for their display. The local Tourist Board may be able to assist in this respect.

If the line has a distinctive name (e.g. "Esk Valley" between Middlesbrough and Whitby, "Breckland" between Norwich, Ely and Cambridge) this should be prominent in the publicity. If not, the user's Group itself may like to suggest one to British Rail, or even run a competition to find one.

It is also a good idea to include a map of the line, especially if the service ends at a different place to ~~where it did~~ ten or twenty years ago. For instance, trains going East from Sleaford (Lincolnshire) used to terminate at Boston; now most of them continue to Skegness. Trains going East from Blackburn no longer run through the Pennines to Skipton, but terminate at Colne. In the South West, Gunnislake is now the terminus of a local service from Plymouth, whereas formally it was an intermediate station on a branch from Bere Alton to Callington.

3. A regular (at least twice - yearly) News Letter - giving details of train and connecting bus services, facilities, bargains etc., is produced by most Groups and distributed in up to 7,000 copies per issue, via stations, local libraries, post offices, village shops etc. Citizen's Advice Bureaux are often willing to take copies, and in some instances local signalmen may take a supply for their signal box, for distribution to the public at unstaffed stations, where they often act as a kind of "Information Officer" for British Rail. Door-to-door leafletting can also be very effective. As it would be costly - in terms of money and manpower - to leaflet every house in a particular town, a selected area could be leafleted with one News Letter; followed by a different area with the next News Letter, six months later. Newsagents are often willing to interleave the local weekly paper with a leaflet produced by a Users' Group, but will normally make a small charge for this.

Some groups also produce members' bulletins from time to time, giving more background information, e.g. on why certain trains are run the way they are, and acting as a forum for members' views.

4. Local organisations - such as ratepayers' associations, social clubs etc., can do much to help by drawing attention to the possibilities of rail travel in their circulars to members, which often attain a substantial readership. Steps should be taken to ensure that the railway receives adequate mention in Holiday Guides. Organisers of special events likely to attract large numbers of people, e.g. sporting fixtures, agricultural shows, fairs and fetes - should be encouraged in their advertising, to mention rail services to the venue, where these exist. Adverts usually mention that there is car parking space; but a rail and/or bus link is suitable for transporting large numbers of people, and so should also be advertised where appropriate.

5. Local Schools - could become more involved e.g. by designing posters: doing project work on the history and current role of the line etc. In some areas there are younger children who have rarely or never been on a train - their interest should be stimulated.

In a Secondary School, the History, Geography and/or Social Studies Departments will often cover local railways in their syllabus, and a Users' Group can provide speakers or material to help here.

British Rail themselves sometimes provide speakers and films to schools and organise some attractive school special trains to places like York. A local Rail Users' Group could well work in co-operation with the local BR management in this respect.

6. A group which has good local contacts and local influence - can do much "behind the scenes" to encourage the use of their rail service for purposes for which it is not considered at present, particularly through MP's, local councillors etc. Councils themselves can assist by making use of the railway wherever possible for the transport of employees (even to the extent of timing meetings to fit in with the train). Firms and Schools can also be encouraged to make use of the rail for the transport of employees and pupils. Clubs and Societies can be encouraged to use rail for outings.

7. Large Shops and other Businesses - may be willing to act as "Sponsors" of local rail services by placing advertisements in local newspapers which include details of rail times, fares, excursions etc., to towns where they have a department store etc., in order to promote their wares. In the Christmas shopping period in 1977, one Nottingham firm placed eye-catching advertisements of this type in the Sleaford, Boston and Skegness local papers helping to promote the train service from that area to Nottingham.

The Sudbury-Marks Tey Rail Users' Association persuaded BR to run certain branch trains through to St Botolph's station in Colchester town centre on three Saturdays up to Christmas 1979 and to offer a reduced fare. This venture was so successful that it was extended for the January sales; subsequently the timetable was re-cast to give two regular daily through journeys from the branch to the centre of Colchester.

At Christmas 1983, the South East Lincolnshire Travellers' Association produced a special leaflet pointing out "When Christmas shopping or visiting the January Sales, the last thing you want is a long, hazardous drive in bad weather, and also the problem of finding somewhere near the shops to park the car. Many railway and bus services provide links with the main shopping places, taking you right into the centre of town." That winter, BR had a number of special promotions on offer: Cheap fares to Nottingham and Lincoln aimed at shoppers; free travel for accompanied children to Nottingham on evenings when shops were open till 9 p.m. (and when a special late train home was run); extra trains and cheap fares to Peterborough for the Queensgate shopping centre.

A similar evening shoppers' offer on the Newark - Nottingham route also included Father Christmas. As the Lincoln - Newark - Nottingham Rail Users' Group pointed out in its publicity for the event, "Reindeer must travel in the Guard's Compartment."

If BR do not appear to be responding to the shoppers' market in your area why not put suggestions to them and, if possible, quote what has been done elsewhere? If your group is also willing to help publicise whatever special facilities or bargains BR are prepared to lay on, this should help persuade them.

8. Novelties - can often be a way of advertising a line, and raising funds for the local Users' Group. A suitable slogan can be printed on a badge or on a ball-point pen. Experience has shown that the latter are very easy to sell. Other possibilities include Tee-shirts, picture postcards, calendars, carrier bags. This sort of promotion is most effective if the line has a simple and distinctive name.
9. Stall. One way of breaking literally into a new market is for a Users' Group to have a stall at the local market, at which BR publicity leaflets can be given away, new members can be recruited and various items can be sold.

West Norfolk Public Transport users have held such a stall in Downham Market, selling garden produce as well as promoting their local service. The Sudbury - Marks Tey Rail Users' Association have held a stall on Sudbury market.

It can also be effective for a group to hold a stall at a local fete, bazaar or transport rally.

10. Anniversaries. If a line is celebrating its Centenary or another anniversary, this provides an excellent opportunity for local users to stage an event to publicise it. A special train was run by the local users group on the Ipswich - Felixstowe branch in May 1977, to mark the line's first 100 years.

In June 1983, the East Norfolk Travellers' Association and RDS co-operated with BR in running a Pullman Special to mark the Centenary of the Norwich - Yarmouth direct line. This event and its associated exhibition was also remarkable in the way that it involved District, Parish Councils and local bodies like the Cub Scouts and Drama Group.

The RDS London and Home Counties Branch promoted similar activities in June 1983 for the 125th Anniversary of the Watford - St Albans Branch - and - as a by-product - probably dissuaded the Local Authority from a road plan that would have involved cutting the line.

Details of Anniversaries can be obtained from various books on Railway History. Rail enthusiast bodies will also be keen to help on such occasions.

11. Exhibitions. A display or exhibition can be mounted in a local library, to publicise the line. BR would supply publicity leaflets, timetables etc., for people to take away; while the Users' Group could mount a display of photographs, maps, information about places served by the line, perhaps some historical material and some explanation about its present and future prospects. Such an exhibition need not be manned but the literature should be "topped up" at regular intervals. In a library, 2 - 4 weeks is the ideal period for such a display.

#### IV LINKING TRAINS WITH BUSES, CARS, BICYCLES.

##### Bus Feeder Services

A second and very important topic for a group is that of bus feeders. Bus Companies (including many small private operators who are often not well known to British Rail) need encouragement to operate their services in connection with rail.

Long bus journeys in themselves are often unacceptable because of the long journey time and inadequate comfort as well as the frequent delays caused by traffic congestion, particularly in urban areas. (The Railway Invigoration Society - one of the two predecessors of the RDS - has already drawn attention to the disadvantages of buses compared with trains in "Can Bus Replace Train?" Published in the Autumn 1977, price 30 pence). A much more attractive overall service can, in some areas, be provided by combining a shorter bus journey with a rail service. This idea has proved a success on the Whitby - Middlesbrough line with a bus feeder from Guisborough to Nunthorpe station. There is ample scope for connections of this kind from rail-less towns to the British Rail network, especially where only a short road journey, say up to five miles, is involved. Since this should stimulate the use of Public Transport the bus operator should, in the right circumstances, also find the idea attractive.

Bus feeders are especially important in rural areas where both bus and rail services are often operated at irregular and infrequent intervals and use of a local bus, in connection with a longer distance train may be the only practicable way of reaching a place by public transport.

The Cotswold Line Promotion Group (for the Oxford - Worcester Line) has held meetings with local independent bus operators and British Rail in order to improve bus rail connections at Moreton-in-Marsh and has asked for the provision of a bus information board at Moreton station.

Bus information boards are common at stations in East Anglia, but connections are not always as good as they might be. The North East Norfolk Travellers' Association and the RIS were instrumental in pressing for, and getting, improved bus connections at Cromer railway station in 1976.

The issuing of joint rail and bus timetables should be encouraged. Timetable booklets have been produced in the South West, Leicestershire, the Highlands and Islands, South Lincolnshire, Suffolk and in other parts, usually on the initiative of the County Council.

More effective in attracting new business, however, is perhaps a free leaflet (folding to make ten pages) "Public Transport at your service" published by Devon County Council and BR for the Honiton area.

A Users' Group can suggest, and indeed help compile, such booklets or leaflets, to BR and the County Council. In return, the timetable booklet or leaflet could mention the existence of the local Users' Group.

#### Car Parking

Much traffic can be attracted to rail by encouraging the practice of "Park and Ride" providing parking facilities at railheads. A large part of the success achieved by the Braintree/Witham Railway Campaign Committee has resulted from the cheap parking facilities provided at Braintree station, thus encouraging commuters to take the train from there rather than driving to a point nearer London. (Indeed, this Committee must take much of the credit for transforming the Braintree line from one which Doctor Beeching wanted to axe, into one which now has an electric service, including some through trains to London. It is a glowing example of railway invigoration and development.)

Local Authorities can have a major influence on car parking, by providing parking space at railheads, preferably free or at least at a lower cost than that available in the town centres to which motorists would normally drive.

To encourage Inter-City travellers to "park and ride", BR have constructed purpose-built "Parkway" stations at Bristol and Alfreton; and have often expanded car-parking space (sometimes where freight sidings used to be) at other stations.

At Lelant Saltings, Cornwall, a new "park-and-ride" halt was built on the St. Ives branch, as a joint venture by BR and Penwith District Council. In 1978, the first year of operation of this scheme, 31,000 cars were parked at Lelant Saltings over the 4-month holiday season and about 100,000 extra passengers carried on branch trains into St. Ives. The District Council, which mans the car-park at busy times, receives 30% of the revenue from the "park-and-ride" rail passengers.

BR are looking at other sites in Cornwall where congestion in the resorts could, as at St. Ives, be relieved by attractive "park-and-ride" facilities. This type of scheme should also be considered for larger towns elsewhere, especially if heavy traffic congestion is unlikely to be solved by road improvement schemes.

#### Bicycles

Cycling enjoyed a modest revival during the 1970s. Sales of bicycles more than doubled between 1972 and 1979 and various studies indicated that the proportion of cycles used by adults increased from 35% to over 50%. Rising fuel costs and increased public awareness of the value of healthy exercise were doubtless major factors.

The "train-and-bike" combination was given a boost by BR's decision in 1977 to carry cycles free of charge on almost all trains. There are many ways in which rail users' groups can exploit this situation. One is by devising and publicising attractive cycle routes between railheads, especially to encourage leisure use of services. The more city-dwellers who take an off-peak train into the country for recreational purposes, the less burden the commuter has to shoulder for providing a service to convey him to work in the city.

Local cycling clubs can be contacted for their ideas in this respect - as can Friends of the Earth, who have placed considerable emphasis on cycling in their transport campaigning. The help of Tourist Boards can also be enlisted; as could any cycle-hirers who have premises close to stations. In several Continental countries, it is possible to hire a cycle at a station. BR have not shown any enthusiasm for this idea; and of course with free carriage of cycles there is less demand for it.

If necessary, representations should be made to BR to ensure that there is adequate space for cycles on trains. Perhaps a list could be produced, showing those trains most recommended for cyclists (those, for example, which will not be carrying large numbers of mail bags!)

Some people cycle to a station to catch a train. Is there safe access for them? Is there a shelter or rack in which to put their cycles at the station? A users' group can monitor such points.

Finally, a sponsored cycle ride (e.g. to a re-opened station; or between two stations) can be a useful way of raising money and interest.

#### V UNSTAFFED STATIONS - PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

About a quarter of all BR's stations are unstaffed, and the vast majority of these are on secondary lines. On the West Cumbria line, for example, between Carlisle and Barrow-in-Furness there are twenty four intermediate stations in 85 1/4 miles, and only two of them are staffed. On the 45 3/4 mile section between Whitehaven and Barrow, none of the stations are staffed. A similar situation can be found on the 49-mile East Suffolk line between Ipswich and Lowestoft, where all nine intermediate stations are unstaffed.

This sort of economy - understandable though it is - brings with it dangers of vandalism and a consequent bad image for BR, quite apart from the obvious inconvenience and unpleasantness for travellers. There may be no quick and easy solution to this problem - but efforts by the local Users' Group to educate the local community to take a pride in its station can help. Sometimes, in consultation with BR, it has been possible for a local amenity group to take over responsibility for the upkeep of station buildings (as at Heckington, Lincs) or to decorate it (as at Downham Market, Norfolk - where the station is staffed only on one shift); while at Brundall, Norfolk, a local flower society took over part of the station garden. Efforts may be made to encourage the local Parish Council, youth group or school to "adopt" its local unstaffed station.

On the Wrexham - Birkenhead line, where vandalism of unstaffed halts was a particular problem, a job creation scheme started in 1980, with local unemployed youngsters repainting the graffiti - ridden buildings.

#### British Rail Agents.

A second disadvantage of unstaffed stations is that local people cannot easily find out about services, other than their local line, or make Inter-City bookings. If one of the officers, or committee members of the local Rail Users' Group lives in the town or village, and this gets known, they can find themselves acting sometimes as an unofficial inquiry clerk. The appointment of a local Travel Agent as British Rail Agent can also be an effective way of filling the gap.

In East Anglia there are BR Agents in Sudbury, Halesworth, Felixstowe, Woodbridge, Beccles, Wymondham, North Walsham, Cromer and Newmarket - all of which have unstaffed stations. Furthermore, at least three towns which are up to eight miles from the nearest railhead - Wisbech, Leiston and Southwold also have Agents. In a limited number of instances, a local shop or Council Office has also made arrangements to sell a particular bargain offer.

A Users' Group with close knowledge of local circumstances can, of course, make suggestions to BR as to where an Agency may be appointed, and help bring the existence of the Agency to the attentions of its members and contacts once it has been set up.

#### Adopting a Station

One of the aims of the rail user group movement is to involve the local community in their railway as much as possible. 'Adopting' a station is one of the practical ways this aim has been achieved by several groups. This section is based on the experience of the South Fylde Line Users' Association (the user group for the Kirkham to Blackpool South line) who adopted Squires Gate station.

The first step is to identify a station in need of attention. In the case of the South Fylde Line they all need looking after but Squires Gate was clearly the worst blackspot on the line. Unstaffed, surrounded by acres of derelict railway land, used as a rubbish dump by nearly everyone, heavily graffitied and vandalised, it is the sort of station that only dedicated rail users would know was still open for business.

Once a station has been identified there are several ways in which a group can consider adopting it. Some groups have gone into partnership with local Parish Councils and other amenity groups, others, like the S.F.L.U.A., have gone it alone. Where parish councils exist it is always worthwhile approaching them with your proposals and frequently their response is positive and supportive. In some cases parish councils have taken the initiative themselves in adopting their own local station.

Before proceeding with formally adopting a station a group must ensure that it has sufficient manpower and resources to support regular working parties. These may need to be weekly to start with, reducing to fortnightly once the main work has been completed. It is desirable to have someone in overall charge.

The next step is to meet British Rail. The S.F.L.U.A. met representatives of BR at Squires Gate station on November 3rd 1982 where a full discussion was held. BR were in favour of the station being adopted. However, they listed the jobs that could NOT be undertaken. These were painting, pointing, structural repairs or alterations, electrical work and work involving going on to the running lines. Although this limits the scope of a group's activity it is still possible to clean the station, remove graffiti, clear drainage channels and gutters, provide flower tubs (although these MUST be 6 feet away from the platform edge and secured to the platform) and ensure that timetable information is correct and unvandalised.

The S.F.L.U.A. went ahead with adopting Squires Gate station.. However, before members could start work the group had to indemnify BR for accidents to working party members or to members of the public who injured themselves as a result of the groups activities.

Experience has shown that liaison with BR management is imperative. Before a working party goes to Squires Gate the Station Manager at Blackpool North is notified as a matter of courtesy. As a result of this contact a good relationship has been developed and the working parties are able to pass on any particular problems they experience or matters that need the attention of the Civil Engineer's Department.

Since the first working party arrived at Squires Gate on Sunday March 13th 1983 over 200 man hours have been spent at the station. The station is certainly more attractive than it was. Little can be done to improve the derelict land surrounding it, although the Fylde Borough Council have been approached to clear rubbish from their land which borders the station. The main result is a clean and tidy station which inspires confidence in the travelling public, and this is of vital importance at an unstaffed station. It is something positive we can do to improve conditions for the travelling public and cement good relations between the RDS and its affiliated user groups and BR management at the same time. How about having a go?



VI SPECIAL TRAINS - WHY AND HOW TO RUN THEM

Users' Groups sometimes charter special trains. If done with sufficient care and preparation, this can be a most rewarding activity, in more ways than one.

Here are just a few examples: The Newmarket & District Rail Users' Association has run various shoppers' specials from Newmarket to Norwich - a journey normally only possible with an awkward change of train. In 1976 the Marlow-Maidenhead Rail Passengers' Association ran four seaside specials from its line. The East Norfolk Travellers' Association in December 1979 ran a highly successful Christmas shopper from Yarmouth to London, and ran a further such train at Christmas 1980. The Sudbury-Marks Tey Rail Users' Association carried 270 people on a trip to Cromer and Sheringham - a journey that would normally require at least two changes of train and re-booking - in June 1980, and ran a further successful train to the same destination in 1983.

RDS itself has been involved in the running of Inter-City trains from North Hertfordshire to Lowestoft and York. Other destinations that have proved popular for RDS and users' group specials include Llandudno, Aberystwyth, Matlock, Portsmouth and Windsor.

Most of these trains were giving passengers through trips on journeys where a change of train would be necessary. They were also showing people that their local line could be used as the start of a longer trip; and hopefully stimulating more leisure usage (especially important on a commuter line like the Sudbury branch, where heavy peak traffic and relatively light off-peak usage has posed a problem.) Finally, they showed the advantage of cheap, attractive fares in gaining new business. It is interesting to note that the Sudbury Association in particular has succeeded in gaining cheap fares for Saturday shopping in Colchester and summer Sunday trips to Clacton, Frinton and Walton, and has actively publicised them, bringing extra usage, and revenue to the line.

During 1982-3, the North East Norfolk Travellers' Association (on its own or in co-operation with RDS) ran five special trains, some of which have been extremely profitable. Consequently, it was able to offer BR £1000 towards a refurbishment of North Walsham station, the busiest on the line.

It is plain for the public to see, in a case like this, that by supporting a local users' group they are generating profits which are ploughed back into the line.

A users' Group wishing to hire a train should first of all approach the BR Divisional Manager with a date (or dates) approximate timings required, route and size of train in mind. Sometimes a personal meeting with the Divisional Manager or one of his passenger marketing staff would be advisable at this early stage, especially if the group has not chartered a train before.

BR may be unable to run a special train on a specific date, because of other commitments, but - assuming that they are willing and able to run the train - they will give a quotation for it, or a series of quotations, e.g. for 400, 500 or 600 seats; or for a 2-car; 3-car or 4-car diesel multiple unit. (Bear in mind that a train holding 500 people will cost less per seat than a train holding 200).

If the group accepts the quotation, it then fixes its own fares, prints tickets, arranges publicity and sales etc.. Past experience has shown that it is usually best to keep fares as low as economically possible.

BR will inform the group of exact timings once these are known. This may be 5 weeks before the train runs - or as little as 3 weeks. At this stage, it is necessary to sign a contract and pay 10% deposit. The remainder of the charter fee should also be paid before the train runs. The deposit is non-returnable should the group have to cancel the train.

A train crew is, naturally, supplied by BR, but the Group chartering the train should provide its own stewards to check tickets, help passengers etc. A leaflet should also be prepared and distributed on the train, telling people about the route, giving return timings, urging them to join the local group etc. This is also a good opportunity to distribute BR literature.

On a hauled train it is also possible to hire a buffet car, but a minimum amount of takings must be guaranteed. Some groups have found it very useful instead to organise their own refreshments and use the guard's compartment or wheel a trolley along the train. This is a useful way of gaining extra revenue and enabling the group to keep fares down - as are such fund-raising activities as holding a raffle on the train.

Groups wishing to charter a train over a freight-only line must expect to pay more, because of the extra administrative work involved beforehand for BR, especially in applying for a Light Railway Order, and extra staff on duty on the day, to ensure passengers' safety. Indeed, on some freight-only lines BR may refuse to allow any passenger trains. However, such trains have been run successfully by RDS and local groups on a number of lines.

It is advisable to take out a simple insurance policy, against personal accident, when chartering a train. Your local BR contact can advise on this.

Finally, conditions may vary in different areas, and so the above advice, based largely on Eastern Region experience, should be regarded as general guidance rather than gospel truth.

An alternative to the hiring of a special train is to take a block booking (say, one entire carriage) on a scheduled service. This could be combined with a coach tour at the destination and an attractive package fare quoted. It will not bring in the Group as much profit or publicity as a special train, but may be a useful first step for newer Groups.

#### VII REOPENINGS - WHY & HOW

80 new or reopened stations have been added to the BR network since 1965 - 7 of them in 1983 alone - reversing a few of the Beeching cuts. The case for rail reopenings, and the experience so far, is set out in RDS' book "BRING BACK THE TRAINS" (published 1983 at £1.60 including postage).

Some Groups have identified sites where new stations might be built, in order to tap new sources of traffic. Surveys have been carried out to assess potential use.

Sometimes the co-operation of British Rail and/or the County Council can be enlisted in the carrying out of such surveys. It must certainly be emphasised that any Group advocating a re-opening must be well-prepared with figures to indicate potential usage; and that the more local people are prepared to fight for a re-opening of a new station; the more they are likely to make good use of it if successful.

This also applies to the re-opening of freight-only lines to passengers. In such cases, an Action Committee or Campaign ought to be set up specifically to campaign for the re-opening; but it should co-operate where appropriate with users' Groups on adjacent lines, as a re-opening would affect their lines, probably leading to a greater volume of traffic etc.

An action group was successful in pressing for the re-opening of Magdalen Rd station in Norfolk in 1975, and five other such bodies are pressing for station or line openings in East Anglia. A similar campaign succeeded in re-opening Watton-at-Stone station (Herts) in 1982.

A dozen special passenger trains have been run on the freight line to Dereham (Norfolk). Other lines on which specials have been run include those serving Wisbech (Cams) Swavesey (Cams) for St. Ives and Walsall - Rugeley (Staffs) - for all of which there are local re-opening campaigns.

The work of such re-opening campaigns also includes studying and arguing the case for re-opening, mounting political pressure, undertaking surveys of potential usage, sometimes organising petitions and possibly also fund-raising.

The role of re-opening campaign and users' Group may be combined, as in the case of STELLA ('Support the East Lancashire Line Association') which ran a very successful train to Leeds using the virtually freight-only link line from Rose Grove to Todmorden, to demonstrate the need for a regular passenger service from East Lancashire to Yorkshire. This line is to regain a regular passenger service in October 1984.

When a line re-opening campaign achieves its aim, it ought then to transform itself into a line users' Association, to help ensure that its achievement is a lasting one.

#### VIII COMPLAINTS AND SUGGESTIONS

There are in existence eleven regional Transport Users' Consultative Committees, whose terms of reference say that they "may consider and make recommendations to the Secretary of State for Transport and the Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection on any matter affecting services and facilities currently provided by the British Railways Board excluding fares and charges." Their powers are limited, but rail users can approach them directly.

However, a local users' Group can often act as a "filter" for the more unreasonable complaints and unrealistic suggestions. Equally, a complaint or suggestion is likely to carry more weight if it comes from a representative Group rather than from an individual. Many people are also more likely to complain to a local person whom they know is in the local users' Group, than to a more distant body like the TUCC.

Experience has shown that some regional TUCCs are more efficient than others in taking up complaints and suggestions.

It is, however, useful for a users' Group to inform the regional TUCC when it has a complaint. A Group may also consider nominating one of its members to serve on the TUCC. (TUCC members are selected by the Secretary of State for Prices and Consumer Protection, from nominations sent in.)

TUCCs also have to hold public hearings if a line or station is threatened with closure. The RDS booklet "HOW TO FIGHT A RAIL CUT" (published 1982 at 20 pence) will enlighten you on this aspect of their work.

#### IX WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT FREIGHT?

Most rail users' groups are mainly or exclusively concerned with passenger services; and, of course, some of them cover lines which are entirely passenger-only.

However, in some cases the existence of a freight service, or the generation of new freight traffic, can benefit a passenger service and increase the line's chance of survival.

In such cases rail users' groups should be encouraging firms to use their local line wherever possible. In particular, companies with premises next to, or close by railway lines should be made aware of the advantages of Section 8 of the Railways Act (1974). This Act allows companies to apply for Government grants which can meet up to 60% of the capital costs, and, with relief on Corporation Tax, final costs CAN be reduced by as much as 75%. The Act helps companies to invest in rail sidings, handling equipment, warehouses, capital costs of land, wagons and locos, storage and loading area etc. The main criteria for giving grant-aid is that the transfer of freight from road to rail or the retention on rail - will improve the environment for the community and that British Rail are willing to convey traffic.

The paper-work for processing a grant is, like all matters dealing with the giving away of Government monies, somewhat lengthy and complex. IT IS THEREFORE EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT THE APPLICATION IS HANDLED IN A CORRECT AND PROPER PROCEDURE. If you hear, i.e. via the local press, of a company applying for a grant - let the RDS Freight Sub-Committee know IMMEDIATELY with as much detail as possible. They will then advise you on what action to take.

Section 8 Grants are normally applicable only to the large type of company, but smaller firms should be made aware of BR parcel facilities; and about "Speedlink" freight, which is succeeding in gaining ever increasing amounts of merchandise, often for trunk haulage by rail and local distribution by road. The establishment of road/rail transfer depots is likely to be a growth area. There are two excellent examples of this - Railstore at Romford and the Milton Freight Depot near Abingdon.

The RDS Freight Sub-Committee has had much experience in dealing with companies applying for grants and will be pleased to advise users' groups accordingly. Information and the special freight leaflet are available from S F Wilkinson, 52 Manor Park, Histon, Cambridge, CB4 4JT (SAE please). BR themselves, of course, produce various leaflets on specialised traffics which should normally be obtained via your local Area/Divisional Manager's Office.

#### X WHAT ROLE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES?

Local councils produce a variety of Plans concerning the future development of towns, villages, districts and countries. District Councils are responsible for Local Plans; County Councils for Structure Plans; Transport Policies & Programmes; Public Transport Plans.

Comments are invited from members of the public and from voluntary bodies. Usually, the production of a Plan will be announced in the local press and leaflets about it will often be available. Some authorities will automatically send out consultation copies of their Plans to local users' groups and RDS Branches, and it is certainly worthwhile to ask to be put on their mailing list for such documents.

Users' groups and RDS Branches/Areas should submit comments on such Plans. Copies of the comments should normally also be sent to the local news media and may also be sent to BR.

The comments need not be very long. They should concentrate on transport aspects of the Plan. For example, will future industrial/commercial developments be sited to take advantage of rail links? If the council is proposing to restrict car usage, is it also intending to improve the public transport alternatives? Is the council making its voice heard against rail cuts? Is it prepared to put any money into supporting services or improving facilities, e.g. re-openings?

It is no good saying "we support" or "we object to" policies without giving specific reasons. Comments like this tend to be treated lightly. Always give a concise supportive statement as to reasons for your objections. This will help your case enormously.

It is advisable to ask for specific commitments from councils, and not be fobbed off with vague pious hopes. Some councils will proclaim their great concern for people without their own transport, but not do anything constructive about it.

Refer to specific paragraphs in the Plan wherever possible. Beware of straying too far from the issue. If you asked for things last year, and received no answer from the council, ask for them again.

It is easy to become disillusioned when your suggestions and comments are disregarded by councils, and to consign the latest Plan to the dustbin, feeling that it would be a waste of time to comment upon it. RESIST THIS TEMPTATION. Submit a comment, even if it is only a brief one. Otherwise, those councils which do nothing for rail will use this as an excuse for their inactivity, claiming that no one is interested.

If you feel your case is not being heard, you can send a copy of your comments to your local District or County Councillor(s) and make sure they know your views.

Finally; watch out for planning applications in the columns of the local press. Some of these may be relevant to the local line or station and merit a comment from the local users.

#### XI FURTHER INFORMATION

BRITISH RAILWAY BOARD, P.O. Box 100, Euston Square, London, NW1 2DZ (Telephone: 01-262-3232)

BR is divided into five regions - Eastern, London Midland, Scottish, Western and Southern - each of which has its own General Manager. For several years, the Regions have been divided into Divisions, which themselves have been subdivided into Areas, Divisional management is, however, currently being phased out; and it is, therefore, likely that, on day-to-day issues, users' groups and RDS Branches/Areas will have most contact with Area Managers.

The British Railways Board has Sector Directors for Inter-City; Freight; Parcels; London & South East Services; Provincial Services. RDS endeavours to maintain contact with them at national level.

Addresses of Area Managers should be displayed at stations. Details of Regional Management can be found in the official BR timetable, published in May each year.

You may sometimes find it necessary to deal with more specialised sections of BR, notably:

1. British Rail Property Board, 274-280 Bishopsgate, London, EC2M 4XG.
2. Travellers' Fare, St. Pancras Chambers, Euston Road, London NW1 2TV.

LONDON TRANSPORT EXECUTIVE, 55 Boardway, London, SW1H 0ED  
London Transport Passengers' Committee, 26 Old Queen Street, London SW1H 9HP

PASSENGER TRANSPORT EXECUTIVES exist in West Midlands, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire, West Yorkshire, Tyne & Wear, Strathclyde. Their addresses can be obtained locally.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORT, 2 Marsham Street, London, SW1P 3EB. The Secretary of State and his two junior ministers may be found here, together with the Railways Directorate.

#### MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Details of all MPs and peers are contained in "DOD'S PARLIAMENTARY COMPANION", which also contains other useful information - such as election results.

MPs and peers can also be found in "WHO'S WHO" - which lists 27,000 people, with biographical information and addresses. This extremely useful book also lists other people - such as union leaders - whom you may wish to contact on specific issues.

Both books should be available in your local library.

#### MEMBERS OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

On some issues you may wish to involve your Euro-MP. Your local library should be able to tell you who he or she is. "WHO'S WHO" will have details; as will the "TIMES GUIDE TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT" (1979)

You can contact any MP at The House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA.

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT

The Municipal Yearbook is the key reference work and should be in your local library. It contains lists of all County and District Councillors and chief officers. Among other information in this extremely useful book are addresses of government departments and their regional offices.

For Parish Councils, it is a good idea to contact the Association of Parish Councils at County Hall, as they can normally supply a list of all Parish Councils within the county.

In many rural parishes, Public Transport Liaison Officers have been appointed. These are volunteers who feed suggestions to the County Council and keep supplies of local train and bus information. Any users' group should co-operate with these people, where they exist, and could nominate suitable members where they do not.

#### LOCAL PRESS

"Willings' Press Guide" gives full details of these, listed both alphabetically and by county. Your local library should have a copy.

#### TOURIST AUTHORITIES

The umbrella organisation is the British Tourist Authority, Queens House, 64 St. James's Street, London, SW1A 1NF (Telephone: 01-629-9191)  
Below this comes the English Tourist Board, 4 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0DU (Telephone: 01-730-3400). There are 14 Regional Tourist Boards, responsible to and partially funded by the ETB, and you should find it useful to maintain contact with the one for your area. Make sure that they do their bit to promote rail services. Some Tourist Boards have helped pay for promotional literature for local lines.

Another useful body in this field is the British Resorts Association, Hon. Sec, I.G. Gill, LLB., PTS., P.O. Box 9, Margate, Kent, CT9 1XZ.

#### OMBUDSMAN

The Ombudsman (or Parliamentary Commissioner) cannot investigate complaints against a nationalised industry; but he can look into complaints of injustice or maladministration by the Government department - like the Department of Transport. You must send your complaint to him via your MP; but can obtain further information from the Parliamentary Commissioner, Church House, Great Smith Street, London, SW1P 3BW.

There is also a Local Government Commissioner.

Neither Commissioner can force central or local Government to put right any instances of injustice or maladministration - but he can be an influential ally. There has also been at least one occasion where an RDS Branch threatened to refer a particular county council to the Ombudsman and almost overnight experienced a more friendly and co-operative attitude from the council!

#### TRANSPORT USERS' CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

There are eleven regional TUCCs and a Central Transport Consultative Committee. The CTUCC's address is: 3-4 Great Marlborough Street, London, W1V 2EA.

#### BUS COMPANIES

Names and Addresses of National Bus Company subsidiaries and many private operators are in the official British Rail timetable, published in May each year.

#### OTHER VOLUNTARY BODIES

Many public libraries keep a register of local bodies. Make sure your Group is on it, but informing the libraries of your aims, officers and subscriptions.

#### RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

The Society's MEMBERS' HANDBOOK contains 16 pages of useful information - e.g. on who is responsible for what in the organisation, its resources, constitution etc.

The General Secretary is B.P.J. Townd, St. Julians, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN11 0RX.

The Chairman of the committee responsible for liaison with users' groups is T.J. Garrod, 15 Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk, NR32 1RQ (Telephone: Lowestoft 0502-81721)

The Sales Officer is F.J. Hastlow, 21 Norfolk Road, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B75 6SQ.



APPENDIX A - Sample Constitution

1. Name: Breckland Line Users' Association.
2. Aims: *the stations* The retention, improvement and greater usage of the Norwich - Ely - Cambridge rail link, and of local bus services, which should be integrated with it wherever possible.
3. Memberships: Membership shall be open to all persons and bodies in agreement with these aims, on payment of a minimum annual subscription of £1.
4. Government: The Association shall be governed by a Committee consisting of the following:-  
Chairman  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
7 Other Members

These shall be elected at an Annual General Meeting to be held the autumn of each year. Members shall receive a minimum of two weeks' notice of the Annual General Meeting, and of any other General Meeting that may be called from time to time.

The Committee may co-opt members to replace any who may resign during the course of a year; and may also co-opt up to 3 additional members during any 12-month period between AGMs.

The Railway Development Society shall be entitled to nominate one member of the Committee, with voting rights.

The Committee may appoint from within its ranks, any additional officers that may be deemed necessary, e.g. Vice Chairman, Membership Secretary, Publicity Officer.

5. Amendments etc. Any amendments to the constitution shall be made at a properly convened General Meeting of members; as shall be any decision to suspend or disband the association and dispose of any funds that may be left.

N.B. All users' groups are autonomous. None is forced to become a corporate member of the Railway Development Society, but very many do.

APPENDIX B - Sample Questionnaire

70 copies were sent out in the summer of 1975 and 30 replies received.

*Res. Society*  
THE RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY

for the retention and modernisation of rail services

EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH

Branch Chairman: Mr P.R. Lawrence, 75 Marlpit Lane, Norwich NR5 8XN (Telephone: Norwich 0603-743446)

The Society would welcome your views regarding the

MARKS TEY - SUDBURY RAILWAY

We hope to issue a report on the line, indicating where usage of it could be increased and if so, how. We successfully completed a similar survey on the Norwich - Cromer - Sheringham line last year, and our East Midlands Area is conducting one on the Grantham-Skegness line.

The Report will be sent to British Rail, the County Councils and other interested bodies.

We thank you for your anticipated help in completing this questionnaire. Please state if you wish any of your views to remain confidential.

Please return the completed questionnaire to the Chairman (address above) as soon as is convenient, and preferably by the end of September 1976.

NAME OF ORGANISATION.....

Delete as appropriate

1. Is the present number of trains on this line  
(a) ENOUGH (b) NOT ENOUGH (c) TOO MANY

2. If you agree with (b) or (c) what changes should be made?

3. Do you think connections at Marks Tey and or Colchester are satisfactory?  
YES / NO  
If NO, how should they be improved?

4. Should there be any through trains, running beyond Colchester or Marks Tey?  
YES / NO  
If YES, where to?

5. Are there any other facilities you would like to see introduced?  
YES / NO  
If YES, please specify

6. Could the train services be publicised?  
YES / NO  
If YES, please specify: (Tick and comment as you think necessary)  
(a) By notice boards in centres of towns and villages

- (b) By local councils
- (c) Via local libraries
- (d) Via local Post Offices
- (e) Via local shops
- (f) Via local business firms (e.g. on staff notice boards)
- (g) Through the local press
- (h) Any other way. (Please give details)

7. Could bus/rail co-ordination be improved?

YES / NO

If YES, please give example.

9. Is there a case for establishing new halts on the line?

YES / NO

If YES, where?

10. Would you support a line users' Association, like the Newmarket & District Rail Users' Association, or the East Suffolk Travellers' Association elsewhere in East Anglia? These local bodies aim to encourage rail travel and further the interests of rail users and indeed public transport users in general. Many are corporate members of the Railway Invigoration Society.

YES / NO

If YES, could you suggest a suitable name for an association for this line?

11. Please give any further information or comments that you think could be helpful.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-0-

The main points arising from the replies to this questionnaire were the bad state of Sudbury station and the possibility of re-siting it; the need for a halt at Cornard; the need for better bus/rail co-ordination; and improved connections at Colchester for points north.

Copies of the 2-page report produced by the RIS were sent not only to BR, the County Councils and the TUOC, but also to the local press and to all bodies who completed the questionnaire.

The Sudbury-Marks Tey Rail Users' Association was subsequently formed and some of its achievements have been noted elsewhere in this book.

APPENDIX C County Councils and Public Transport

During the 1970s, County Councils have experienced increasing powers and responsibilities in the field of public transport. Of particular relevance to rail users' groups are:

**PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLANS**

Section 2 of the Transport Act 1978 gives directions to each non-metropolitan County Council to prepare and publish a Public Transport Passenger Plan for the following 5 year period by March 31st of each year. One of the Plan's objectives should be to review the extent to which the needs of the communities within each county are met by existing services, as well as a description of each council's policies and objectives for public passenger transport.

Section 2 (4) provides for "transport user organisations" to comment on a preliminary draft of the plan; although apart from the views submitted by operators and District Council, all other comments may be totally ignored by the County Council if it so wishes! When a Group makes a submission on a PTP draft, therefore, it should send a copy to the local press so as to ensure that enough interest is generated in its views to result in proper consideration being given to them, rather than just a postcard acknowledgement.

The County Surveyor's department is normally responsible for these matters and, unless otherwise, indicated by the Council, correspondence on transport matters should normally be addressed to him. However, the Planning Department usually take an interest in transport matters as well, and sometimes other departments (e.g. Education, Social Services) are involved. In some cases it is, therefore, a good idea to send such departments, and indeed the Chairman of the Council's Transport Committee, a copy of communications to the County Surveyor.

A rail users' Group is advised to obtain at least one copy of Department of Transport Circular 8/78 "Transport Act 1978: Public Transport Planning in Non-Metropolitan Counties" dated August 31st, which gives extensive details of the way in which the Government expects the preparation of public transport plans to proceed. The pamphlet is available from HMSO at 30 pence, plus postage.

NEWCASTLE & CARLISLE  
RAIL USERS' ASSOCIATION

This newly-formed association aims to:-

- \* Campaign for the retention and improvement of the rail-way service between Newcastle, Hexham and Carlisle.
- \* Seek improvements or changes considered necessary by the users of the line.
- \* Exert pressure to obtain the investment which is needed to secure the long-term future of the line.
- \* Attract increased traffic to the line.
- \* Oppose negative proposals which may adversely affect the future of our line.
- \* Form a link between the public and local British Rail management, improving awareness of services offered, and problems experienced.

Similar organisations elsewhere have enjoyed considerable success in increasing the use made by the public of their local lines, and many passengers now benefit from improved services which have been planned after consultation with users associations.

-----X-----  
DON'T JUST STAND THERE -  
JOIN THE N&CRUA!  
-----X-----

>>>-----  
TO: J. Makepeace (chairman) The Dower House, Humshaugh, Hexham  
D.A. Horne (sec.) 7, Leadgate, Allendale, Northumberland (A'dale 611)

I would like to join the Newcastle & Carlisle Rail Users' Association.

I enclose a subscription of \_\_\_\_\_ (min. 50p)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

If a receipt is required, please enclose an s.a.e. Thank you.

# N.E.N.T.A. RAIL TOURS

## DAY TRIP BY INTER-CITY TRAIN TO LONDON

### SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 19th 1983

Travel in style by main line train, direct from North Walsham, Worstead, Wroxham, Salhouse, Norwich and Diss (there will be service train connections from Sheringham, West Runton, Cromer and Gunton).

Take this opportunity to see the many sights in the English capital, enjoy a day Christmas shopping in Oxford Street, or see the famous Regent Street Christmas Lights.

*APPROX. TIMINGS FOR THE SPECIAL TRAIN ARE AS FOLLOWS:*

North Walsham	depart	0810	Service Train connections	
Worstead	depart	0816	(Normal British Rail fare applies)	
Wroxham	depart	0825	Sheringham	depart 0721
Salhouse	depart	0831	West Runton	depart 0725
Norwich	depart	0850	Cromer	depart 0733
Diss	depart	0915	Gunton	depart 0745
London	arrive	1110	North Walsham	arrive 0751

The return departure time from London will be 1845. Final timings will be notified to you approx. ten days before the train runs. There will be a travellers fayre buffet car, for the sale of drinks and refreshments throughout the journey on this train.

**FARE**  
**£6.75 adult; £5.75 child**  
**BOOK NOW!**

**Tickets from: North Norfolk Insurance Agencies, Kings Arms St, North Walsham or complete the slip below.**  
**Telephone enquiries WALCOT 650715**

North East Norfolk Travellers Association in co-operation with the Railway Development Society is a voluntary organization looking after the interests of your local Sheringham-Norwich rail-link. More trips are planned for 1984 from North Walsham and Norwich. Ask for details!

For postal bookings please complete this slip and send to:  
R. DAVIES, 36 LIGHTHOUSE CLOSE, HAPPISBURGH, NORWICH NR12 0QE

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ Adult Tickets, \_\_\_\_\_ Child Tickets  
for the Rail Excursion to London on November 19th, 1983  
(Cheques and Postal Orders payable to N.E.N.T.A.)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE NO. \_\_\_\_\_

## RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

The Society is a national, independent, voluntary body, formed in 1978 by the amalgamation of the Railway Invigoration Society and the Railway Development Association, both of which were formed in the early 1950s.

Its aims are the retention, modernisation and greater usage of rail transport, for both passengers and freight. Affiliated to RDS are many local rail users' groups and reopening campaigns.

Membership is open to all who are in general agreement with the aims of the Society and current subscriptions are:

Ordinary Members	£5
Corporate Members	£6
Local Authorities	£6
Parish Councils & Voluntary Bodies	£5
Students over 18	£3
Members over 65	£3
Students under 18	£2
Families	£5 (plus £1 for each member of household)

Subscriptions should be sent to the Membership Secretary, Railway Development Society, BM/RDS, London, WC1N 3XX.

