

November 1976

Branch Secretary: Mr. T.J. Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd., Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ.

TIMETABLE IMPROVEMENTS

October 4th saw some important improvements to East Anglia's rail services. Many Inter City trains between Norwich and London have been speeded up by up to 5 minutes, usually by omitting the stop at Chelmsford. This move, which should also ease overcrowding on some trains at the London end, has been made possible by the introduction of new electric multiple units giving an improved service between London and Colchester. Many connecting services on the Sudbury, East Suffolk and St. Edmunds lines have therefore been retimed by a few minutes.

The emergence of the High Speed Train on the Western Region means that high quality coaches will now be available for use elsewhere on the Inter City network. We hope that, by the "cascading" process, we shall soon see improved stock in East Anglia.

The 06.52 Ipswich - Lowestoft train now leaves 10 minutes later and no longer spends 13 minutes standing in Halesworth station. Our Vice-Chairman, Mr. F.I.S. Carter comments, "This delay was introduced when it was proposed to single the line, except between Saxmundham and Halesworth, in order to avoid delays to the 07.22 through train from Lowestoft." A good omen?

The 18.50 Sunday train from Norwich now calls at Wymondham at 19.05 before continuing to Cambridge and London. This is a result of pressure from the R.I.S. and a small survey conducted by us earlier in the year (see last Newsletter). We have issued our own leaflet for distribution in Wymondham, announcing this improvement, and also received useful publicity in the Norwich Mercury (8.10.76).

BRANCH MEETING HELD AT NORWICH, SEPTEMBER 25th

There was an attendance of 40, and 4 apologies for absence were received. In the business section of the meeting, Mr. K.O. Cutmore moved the following resolution, which was carried nem con: "This meeting asks the relevant government departments to take note of the recently published criticism by the International Energy Agency in Paris, of Britain's neglect of rail transport in the energy-saving field". Copies have been sent to the Secretaries of State for Transport, the Environment and Energy.

The main part of the meeting was devoted to a forum on railways and other transport matters, to which we welcomed a panel of four guests, each of whom began by outlining the railways' future as he saw it.

Mr. Russell Grimmer (Chairman, Norwich No. 3 Branch, N.U.R.) began by saying it was high time that public transport, especially railways, were taken out of party politics. Over the years, too many politicians had "jumped on the bandwagon" when it suited them, but their fine words and promises had not been born out by action.

The NUR was sometimes accused of scaremongering about rail closure threats; but in 1962 they had warned people of what could happen, and many of the Beeching cuts had subsequently come about. Unfortunately, many people had "not begun to cry until it hurt" and had protested too late. The promised replacement bus services had been a failure - yet now the Government's Green Paper was again suggesting these. "Apparently they haven't learnt their lesson", said Mr. Grimmer.

Assurances might be given at local level that there would be no closures - but decisions about these were often taken at a much higher level.

He concluded by stressing the role of County Councils and claiming that Norfolk was not yet effectively using its powers under the 1972 Local Government Act to co-ordinate public transport.

Mr. Raymond Edwards (Transport Co-ordinating Officer, Norfolk County Council) stated that he personally was very disappointed in the Green Paper. It was not the objective analysis many people had hoped for. The questions of motor taxes and business motoring were very relevant to any transport discussion, but had been "withdrawn from discussion because of pressure from the motor lobby".

The Paper contained many interesting statistics, but the slack and haphazard presentation of these was not what one would expect from supposedly highly qualified statisticians. Statistics were often presented in a way that indicated a pro-road bias; with no account taken of many of the indirect costs of road transport.

Mr. Stanley Coe (Chairman, North East Norfolk Travellers' Association) described the formation of NENTA and some of its achievements during its first year of existence. Many of its members were senior citizens who greatly appreciated their half-fare concessions on the trains. An increasing number of people were retiring to the Cromer area and were dependent on the rail service. Ordinary people who used the railways often felt helpless in the face of civil servants in Whitehall.

Mr. Gordon Clarke (British Rail Divisional Manager, Norwich) felt we should put the Green Paper into perspective. It was intended simply as a discussion document, not a policy. It contained a lot of "woolly thinking" but it did bring up questions that needed ventilating.

The Beeching cuts, said Mr. Clarke, had resulted from the 1962 Transport Act, when there was no subsidy from the government to BR. The 1968 Act had recognised the principle of subsidising lines and there had been very few closures since then. The more recent change from grants for individual lines to a global grant (i.e. for the whole network) had brought certain advantages. "It is my job to run a passenger railway within that global sum", said Mr. Clarke, adding that this sum would not increase within the next few years and so the system should be run as economically as possible. The global grant enabled him to run the system more flexibly, e.g. timings on the Cromer line could now be altered without cumbersome reference to central government as in the days of individual grants.

Because of the increased powers of County Councils, any station closure procedure could not be completed in under 2 years now. The present level of capital expenditure by the government was "just enough to keep the present system going, but no more."

QUESTIONS: What were the panels views on reopening freight lines to passengers?

Mr. Clarke said the cost of upgrading track and installing signalling would have to be paid for by the County Council, perhaps with government help; BR would have to pay any subsidy to the service. In view of their global grant for all subsidised lines, he felt that subsidising an extra passenger line might mean that another line would have to suffer reduced support. He suggested it might be better to increase facilities on existing lines (e.g. a halt at Suffield Park).

Mr. Edwards thought the change of philosophy that had led to acceptance of grants for some rail services might work its way through to general acceptance of subsidies for public transport in future - but of course the financial crisis made reopenings less likely at present. Mr. Grimmer commented that this was all very well, but the longer a reopening was put off, the more it was going to cost. What was the best way to increase business for BR?

Increased capital expenditure, was Mr. Clarke's reply. They were operating almost to capacity with existing stock.

Questioned further on freight services, he said one air-braked freight train carried as much as 3 or 4 old-style wagon-load trains. Most CWS products from Lowestoft went by rail to Norwich where, with goods from Norwich, they continued to March to join the overnight air-braked freight. Sugar from Cantley also travelled this way. Goods from Kings Lynn was prospering, and might justify an air-braked service of its own to Scotland next year. Traffic from the smaller ports tended to fluctuate and not provide the constant flow which the railways preferred.

Was there any justification for the frequently-voiced complaint that the railways were overstuffed?

Mr. Grimmer and Mr. Coe both quoted figures to show the sharp drop in numbers of railwaymen since 1960. Mr. Grimmer added that if all rest-day working and overtime were stopped, "the railways would grind to a halt".

Mr. Clarke showed that productivity had increased in the Norwich Division during the 6 years he had been there. There had been 5,000 employees in 1970, now there were 3,250 - yet they were carrying more traffic.

Answering further questions on reopenings, Mr. Clarke suggested that coaches from Norwich to Thetford might be diverted to serve Dereham instead, as an alternative to a rail passenger service. Mr. Edwards commented on Reepham's problems by saying that Sovereign Coaches, formerly the only operators serving it, had prevented anyone else from doing so by applying for licences on all roads leading there!

Material for the Cambridge Northern By-pass would now be provided locally, said Mr. Clarke, so BR would not really be able to move it. Trinity College, owners of land where a railhead could have been built, had demanded an exorbitant sum for it.

Comments were voiced about unoccupied first-class coaches on Norwich - London trains, while second-class ones were full. Mr. Clarke explained that a fixed formation of coaches usually made 5 daily trips on this service and first class compartments empty on, say, the 14.29 ex Norwich would be full when they returned on the 17.30. Omitting the Chelmsford stop on some trains might make it possible, however, to add extra second-class coaches to some trains.

Electrification plans for Bishops Stortford - Cambridge, said Mr. Clarke, had been finalised and the decision on when to go ahead was now up to the government. Competing for priority with this route was the St. Pancras - Bedford line. He estimated it would be electrified "by the mid-80s."

Time did not permit us to put all the questions we would have liked. Mr. K.O. Cutmore moved a vote of thanks to our four guests, and this was endorsed by applause from all present.

#### EXHIBITIONS

The RIS exhibition at Sudbury and then at Lowestoft went off smoothly and successfully. At Lowestoft in particular a large number of people saw it and the stock of RIS and BR leaflets needed constant replenishment. A substantial review in the Lowestoft Journal (1.10.76) paid tribute to our "very convincing arguments in favour of rail transport".

Thanks to Messrs. S.F. Wilkinson, P.R. Lawrence, W.G. Huxtable and M.D. Bayes for their help in setting up and dismantling the material.

How about setting up the exhibition in YOUR town?

#### SPECIAL TO LENWADE

A 6-coach set of non-corridor stock behind a class 31 diesel made its way to Lenwade on October 2nd, the first passenger train to pass through Aylsham and Reepham for several years. 6 RIS members were able to travel on the train, an enthusiasts' special organised most efficiently by the Lea Valley Railway Club. It was, of course, restricted to 20 mph on the branch and made stops at Aylsham (where a large number of local people were there to meet it) and Reepham (where again local people turned out to greet it).

The BBC sent a team to report the event and the efforts to reopen the line as far as Reepham to passengers. A good report on "Look East" on 4.10.76 featured interviews with Mr. B.F. Bryant and Mr. R. Drage of ADRAC on Aylsham station; Councillor A. Fisher on the train, and Mr. T.J. Garrod at Lenwade.

Meanwhile, the Aylsham & District Rail Action Committee has continued to be very busy in its local campaign. A 4-page submission on the Draft Norfolk Structure Plan put the case for reopening, especially since it appears that most people in the area will be expected to travel outside it to their place of work. The value of the line as "a good feeder route from areas which are at present neglected by public transport services" is stressed. The costs, effects on traffic in Norwich and the future availability of oil are other topics dealt with.

Mr. R. Drage has been appointed Membership Secretary, to deal with the ever-increasing numbers of associate members. Leaflet distribution in Buxton has brought in several more; next on the list is Coltishall. The first issue of what is to be a regular ADRAC Members' Newsletter has also appeared.

#### BY PLANE OR TRAIN?

Air Anglia and Peters Aviation are again applying to run scheduled flights from Norwich Airport to Heathrow and Gatwick.

The RIS and Transport 2000 have sent a joint objection to the Civil Aviation Authority. Our main reasons are that Norwich has good Inter City trains to London; travellers bound for Gatwick can do the whole journey by rail in 3½ hours; and to Heathrow in less, once the London Underground extension is completed. Air feeder services from Norwich into international flights are already catered for by the link to Amsterdam, which gives excellent connections to the world's airlines and, incidentally, to the European rail network. We are therefore unconvinced of the need for parallel rail and air links to London, which could result in wasteful competition between two modes of transport.

#### SUFFOLK STRUCTURE PLAN

Our submission to the County Council was published on September 2nd and was reported in considerable detail in the East Anglian Daily Times (9.9.76) and in rather less detail in the Eastern Daily Press (7.9.76)

Many of our points on the case for public transport, and especially rail, were similar to those in our Norfolk Structure Plan submission (see last Newsletter). We welcome promises that Suffolk County Council will encourage "park and ride" and will help to publicise services. We put the case for reopening halts in the Ipswich area (Bealings, Bentley, Branford etc.), especially since the Report of Survey shows the trend since 1961 for a considerable proportion of the Ipswich workforce (now 25%) to live outside the town. We also reiterate our support for electrification of the main line to Norwich and for a halt at Cornard.

We support the intention to press for a rail-bus interchange at Lowestoft and add "The opportunity is there to give Lowestoft a station that could be a model for East Anglia" - provided it is still on the present site or within about 100 yards of it.

We draw attention to the need for a better bus service to Southwold, with improved connections with trains; and put the case for a joint rail and bus timetable, possibly produced by the County Council (as happens in part of Leicestershire).

Growth along the A45 corridor (which is also rail served) is supported in our submission, as is the Council's intention that Lowestoft, Halesworth, Saxmundham and Brandon shall grow further. We feel their suggestion of growth at Mildenhall merits less support, however; and suggested growth at Eye must be matched by improved public transport - possibly reopening Mellis station.

We express concern at the news that only 1% of the total tonnage from Ipswich docks goes by rail - especially as the links are very good. "There is surely potential for the railways to carry a much greater share of this traffic". (NB: Details of ton-mileage are not given; this might put a different complexion on things. But it is still not good enough).

A call for better rail links from Suffolk to the Midlands and North is made in our submission, especially in view of the predicted growth in passenger traffic from Harwich and Felixstowe to the Continent. (At present a coach service operates from Ipswich station to Felixstowe dock for passengers leaving from there.)

#### MEMBERS' MEETING WITH NORFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL OFFICIALS

Our Chairman, Mr. P.R. Lawrence, arranged a private meeting with the Transport Co-ordinating Officer of NCC and an official of the Planning Department on July 28th. Despite the time of year and fairly short notice given, 18 local members of the RIS attended and a most useful exchange of views took place. The meeting lasted 2½ hours and could have gone on much longer!

#### MARCH - WISBECH REOPENING CAMPAIGN

The Principal of the Isle of Ely College, Mr. A. Goodburn (who is a member of the Wisbech & March Rail Action Committee) has asked all students to complete a questionnaire when they enrol, giving details of their transport habits and whether they would use a restored passenger service from March. There are currently 6000 students at the college. The results of the survey should give up-to-date evidence for WAMRAC's continuing campaign to get this line reopened.

#### IS THAT MOTORWAY REALLY NECESSARY?

Along with many like-minded bodies, we have been approached by the Blackbrook Valley Action Group in Cheshire to support their conference at Altrincham on November 6th, to discuss opposition to further motorways and the need to look to alternatives. Mr. G. Collett will be attending on behalf of the RIS National Committee and East Anglia will be represented by our member Mr. D. Maudlin. On behalf of the branch, the Secretary has also signed the BVAG petition which "urgently requests the Secretary of State to ensure that no further Public Inquiries into road proposals take place until a full independent review of the Inquiry System has been undertaken and the resulting recommendations for the protection of the public have been incorporated into the Inquiry procedure."

This is in accordance with previously stated RIS policy on the matter.

#### ESTA RIDES AGAIN!

We are pleased to report that the East Suffolk Travellers' Association has been reactivated after 18 months in "mothballs". ESTA is the oldest line users' association in East Anglia, and a corporate member of the RIS.

ESTA's committee met in late July to formulate a reply to the Green Paper, in which it firmly rejected any idea of replacing the Lowestoft - Ipswich line by a bus service. It also suggested ways of cutting costs and boosting usage.

On September 20th, a General Meeting of ESTA, held at Halesworth and attended by 30 people, voted to reactivate the association. Some changes in the constitution were agreed. Mr. D. Maudlin gave a talk on the work of the Newmarket & District Rail Users' Association.

The new officers and committee of ESTA are: Chairman - Mr. A.W. Godfrey; Secretary - Mr. M.J. Faraher, 21 Briarwood Rd., Woodbridge; Treasurer - Miss S. Malham; Membership Secretary - Mr. V.W. Hinkley; Publicity Officer - Mr. T.J. Garrod; Archivist - Mr. A. Hadingham. Other committee members - Dr. W.J. Wren, Mrs B. Bunch, Mrs A. Daly Briscoe, Mrs R. Schreiber, Mrs A.M. Helps, Mrs R. Robinson, Mr. C.G. Green, Mr. A. Barrett-Jenkins, Mr. R. Ashford, Mr. W. Howard, Mr. N.J. Friend, Mr. F.C. Coleman, Mr. F.I.S. Carter, Mr. Brown.

ESTA will shortly be issuing a newsletter entitled "East Suffolk Travel", publicising local services. It is planned to print 4000 copies, to be distributed through a variety of outlets, twice yearly.

The Felixstowe Branch of ESTA, which was not "mothballed", has just issued its seventh newsletter and, on October 12th, held a public meeting at which Mr. R.M. Senter, of British Rail, gave a talk and films were shown.

The branch is proposing to run a special train on the Felixstowe line on April 29th, 1977, to celebrate the centenary of its opening. The itinerary is likely to include the dock line (which was part of the original route, the spur to Felixstowe Town being opened 21 years later). An exhibition, incorporating material from the RIS exhibition, is also planned. We hope to announce full details in our next Newsletter.

#### WEST RUNTON WANTS THAT TRAIN!

From October 4th, the 12.43 ex Sheringham omitted its stop at West Runton. BR said the train must be sure of making a connection with the re-timed London train at Norwich. But this caused much bad feeling amongst villagers, and NENTA Treasurer Mr. C.J. Wheeler soon had 100 signatures on a petition asking for the stop to be reinstated. Mr. Wheeler argued that by reversing in 2 minutes, instead of 3, at Cromer, the train could still be in Norwich on time.

We are pleased to report that BR have looked again at the timings and, from October 18th this train - now the 12.41, has again been stopping at West Runton and also Salhouse (which had also been omitted from the new schedule.)

#### JOB CREATION ON THE NORTH NORFOLK RAILWAY

The NNR Co. has been awarded a £14,570 grant from the Manpower Services Commission to provide ten unskilled labourers and two supervisors with work involving restoration and maintenance on their Sheringham - Weybourne line. A possible precedent for railway improvements elsewhere?

#### NEWS OF MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members:

1. Mr. D.E. Mathew, 38 Reeve St., Lowestoft, Suffolk.
2. Mr. S. Parker, 9 Orchard Ave., Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk.
3. Mr. G.W. Draper, 163 Long Rd., Lowestoft, Suffolk.
4. Mr. P. Wakefield, 43 High St., Oakington, Cambridge, CB4 5AG.
5. Mr. G.W. Murphy, 150 Colville Rd., Oulton Broad, Lowestoft, Suffolk.
6. Colchester & District Chamber of Trade & Commerce Ltd., Director & Gen. Sec., Mr. H.G. Martin, Prudential Chambers, 67 North Hill, COLCHESTER, Essex CO1 1PX.
7. Sudbury Labour Party, Sec: Mrs E.A. Weavers, Hope Villa, Burkitts Lane, SUDBURY, Suffolk.

The Branches & Areas Sub-committee of the RIS has decided that our Branch should include an extra part of North East Essex. We now cover the Harwich and Clacton & Walton branches as well as the main line to Marks Tey and the Sudbury branch.

We regret to announce the death in September of Mr. H.A.J. Gray, aged 75. Mr. Gray was an RIS member and Chairman of WyDFRAC for the first year of its existence, when he made a very important contribution to the Dereham and Fakenham reopening campaign.

#### BENTLEY REOPENING - NOT YET ... BUT SOME TIME?

Suffolk County Council's Transport Co-ordinating Sub-committee, on September 16th, resolved that the case for reopening Bentley station, on the basis of the results of BenSAC's survey (see last Newsletter), could not be supported.

They did, however, also indicate that the question could be reconsidered "when the line had been electrified, ... in the light of the level of service which may then be practicable."

The Transport Co-ordinator has also been asked to investigate the possibility of improving Bentley's bus services, though the County Surveyor has admitted that "this aspect may prove difficult of solution."

Mrs Molly Kitteridge, Secretary of the Bentley Station Action Committee, commented in a letter to the County Surveyor: "We regret of course that this decision has been taken, particularly as it is obvious... that nothing further will be done about buses. Your remark that the Operator has said that "different people want different destinations at different times" shows just how hopeless the situation is.... In fact, people want to go mostly in the direction of Ipswich, sometimes Colchester, and this is what the railway service has been laid on to do."

The RIS has attempted to obtain more information from the County Surveyor. If 132 daily journeys, on the basis of 3 down and 4 up trains, was considered not enough, by the Sub-committee, what would they have considered a sufficient figure to justify reopening? We have received no figure from the County Surveyor - only a statement that "The Sub-committee was not asked to determine a level of potential users at which the project could have been supported." So, amazingly, these councillors appear to have deemed something to be "not enough" without any criterion by which to judge it, any idea of what would be enough!

We also asked whether a survey of potential users of, say, extra buses into Ipswich would be undertaken, similar to that carried out by BenSAC for the trains. No reply on this point has yet been received, a month after we first asked the question.

Clearly the position is most unsatisfactory and we shall continue to press for meaningful answers.

#### IPSWICH TRAFFIC: IS A NEW BY-PASS THE ANSWER?

A juggernaut killed two people on the Valley Road section of the Ipswich by-pass in September. Not unnaturally, Valley Road residents stepped up calls for an early start of the town's proposed multi-million pound southern by-pass, which would go from Claydon to Martlesham, the long way round via Wherstead. The roads lobby and local politicians quickly joined in, exploiting the emotionally-charged situation, and the local press took what is believed to be an unprecedented step by publishing a petition form in nearly every issue for a fortnight and acting as co-ordinators for the campaign.

On October 1st the RIS issued a statement asking:

- (a) What alternatives are there to a by-pass?
- (b) If one or more of these alternatives is accepted, to what extent, if any, will a by-pass still be necessary (e.g. will it need to be on the extravagant scale at present suggested?)
- (c) If a by-pass is built, to what extent will it actually solve the "juggernaut" problem?

We then showed how the rail system could take more freight, to Ipswich and Felixstowe docks in particular, and called for greater investment in local rail links, e.g. by doubling the track between Derby Road and Trimley, creating extra capacity and using up far less land than an equivalent length of road.

We concluded by stating we were unconvinced that a by-pass would solve Ipswich's traffic problem, or was indeed the best way of tackling it.

Mr. T.J. Garrod was subsequently interviewed on Radio Orwell on October 4th, and took part as a member of the panel in their phone-in programme on October 12th, when he was able to put over details of the RIS' case. Contact has also been made with some local individuals and bodies opposed to the proposed by-pass.

Two interesting footnotes: 18,000 people signed the pro-by-pass petition, about three quarters of them actually from Ipswich. That's a response of just over 10% of the population - compare this with 35% of Bentley households who responded to BenSAC's survey, which involved more than just signing a piece of paper.

Mr. S. Watkinson, clerk of Needham Market Town Council (in the EADT, 22.10.76) said the number of heavy lorries using Needham Market High Street as a route has not noticeably decreased since the construction of the by-pass. Indeed, two County Council representatives at the Structure Plan meeting in Lowestoft on September 30th, admitted that, even when the much talked-of lorry network is finalised, they will have no powers to force lorries to use particular roads.

#### NEWS FROM KINGS LYNN

Our Branch Committee Member Mr. C.J. Milnes reports as follows:

Freight traffic at Kings Lynn has been improving recently. About 15 wagons (60mph type) leave Lynn every day for northern towns, carrying tinned food and other food produce. Chemical traffic has increased, and many new wagons, including some owned by W.J. Cory & Son are to be seen in the sidings. A full trainload of coiled steel leaves Lynn for Wolverhampton every day. Sand traffic is steady. But NCL traffic has dwindled and the NCL Sundries Depots at Kings Lynn and South Lynn are roped off and out of use. Ordinary parcels traffic is very heavy, often covering 2 platforms...

Despite the good traffic levels, the infrastructure is in a deteriorating condition. According to a permanent way railman..., the track between Downham and Ely is now in such a bad condition that a 30 mph speed limit is to be introduced on both lines over the whole Downham - Ely stretch. Frequent slips in the embankments, splitting sleepers and rails coming out of gauge are to blame... Hot weather has dried out the embankments so much that huge gaps have appeared and ballast which is mostly cinders has disappeared into the ground.

Mr. Milnes concludes, "If BR considers spending £100 million rebuilding Liverpool St. couldn't they spare just £1 million to make sure that there will still be decent rail services running into that station when it is finished?"

On the same line, West Norfolk Public Transport Users are suggesting to BR that the 15.20 and 18.22 Sunday trains ex Lynn and 18.36 ex Liverpool St. should stop at Magdalen Rd. They are also urging Eastern Counties to consider diverting some local buses into Downham to serve the railway station. It is also understood that the decision to de-staff Downham station has been deferred for 6 months.

#### GOOD RESPONSE TO SUDBURY SURVEY

Our Branch Chairman, Mr. P.R. Lawrence, has almost completed analysing the results of the RIS survey of local opinion in the catchment area of the Marks Tey - Sudbury line. 70 questionnaires were sent out and 30 replies received - a 43% response. The main points of concern apparent from the replies are the bad state of Sudbury station and the possibility of re-siting it; the need for a halt at Cornard; better bus/rail co-ordination; and improved connections at Colchester for points north.

The full report of the survey should be ready in about a week. Copies will be sent to all interested parties, and to RIS members in the area served by the line. Any other member wishing for a copy should contact Mr. Lawrence, sending a stamped addressed envelope.

During the course of the survey we also made contact with the Marks Tey Rail Users' Association and the Sudbury & District Rail Action Committee - the latter body being originally set up at the time of the Beeching cuts. We hope to arrange a meeting shortly with both bodies and other interested people in the area.

#### "TRANSPORT POLICY TOMORROW"

The Branch Secretary has three spare copies of this booklet - Transport 2000's excellent 58-page reply to the Green Paper. A wealth of useful information is contained in it, putting a case in favour of public transport. Please let Mr. Garrod know if you would like a copy, and enclose a stamp. First come, first served!

#### A.G.M. PRIOR WARNING

The Branch Annual General Meeting is set provisionally for Saturday, January 29th, 1977, in Ipswich Town Hall. Full details later. In the meantime, please make a note of the date.

#### SELT A IS FORMED

The South East Lincolnshire Travellers' Association (SELT A) was formed at a meeting in Boston on Saturday, October 23rd. The meeting, jointly organised by the East Anglian Branch and the two local Area Representatives of the RIS, was attended by 18 people. Those present came from Skegness, Thorpe St. Peter, Boston, Swineshead and Sleaford, all places served by the Grantham - Skegness line. Particular thanks are due to Mr. S.F. Wilkinson, who did most of the organising of the survey which formed the background to the meeting.

Mr. M.J. Savage (RIS Area Representative, North & East Lincs) was in the chair and the meeting was addressed by Mr. T.J. Garrod, on the work of the RIS, and Mr. D. Maudlin, on the advantages of a line users' association.

It was resolved nem con to form a local association, to be called SELTA. Its aims are the retention and improvement of passenger and freight services and facilities on the Grantham - Sleaford - Boston - Skegness railway and associated bus services; and encouraging greater use of public transport. A minimum annual subscription of 30p (individual members) and 50p (corporate members) was agreed. Messrs. P. Sharpe, J. Parry, P.B. Jowett and R.L. Waite agreed to serve on the committee.

An interesting discussion took place on transport in South East Lincs. It was pointed out that the train from Cambridge arriving in Sleaford at 12.36 is scheduled to miss the connection to Boston and Skegness by 6 minutes - the next connection being 2 hours later! This sort of problem could be taken up by the new association.

Travelling to Mablethorpe by public transport takes twice as long as it used to, now that its railway has closed. Many cuts in local bus services were being threatened. A resolution was unanimously passed, urging "That attention be given by Lincs. and Humberside County Councils to the possible reopening of the Firsby - Grimsby line and that no building over the trackbed be permitted".

Re-laying between Boston and Spalding was also discussed. It was felt that, while this was desirable, Firsby - Grimsby ought to have priority. Mr. J.W. Barfield said that the high incidence of level crossings had been the main reason for closure of much of this line (the East Lincs. Line) and any reopened line ought to be operated on light railway principles.

A further meeting of SELTA is to be held shortly in Sleaford, when it is hoped to elect officers and arrange the production and distribution of a newsletter.

#### WyDFRAC PUBLIC MEETING - DEREHAM, NOVEMBER 24th

RIS members who can get to Church House, Dereham on Wednesday, November 24th for WyDFRAC's Public Meeting and AGM will be very welcome. Church House is next to the parish church, and the meeting begins at 7.45 p.m. Mr. P. Hemnall, a supporter of WyDFRAC, will be running his vintage bus from Fakenham (dep. Market Place 6.45) and back after the meeting, free of charge. The meeting will be addressed by Mr. J.S. Hull, (Secretary, WyDFRAC), Councillor Russell Grimmer and Mr. T.J. Garrod.

#### IN BRIEF

1. The Branch Committee will meet at Histon on November 20th. Items for the agenda should be sent to the Branch Secretary.
2. The National Committee will meet on December 4th. Any branch member with a matter for discussion should again contact the Branch Secretary.
3. The October and November issues of the Waveney Clarion contain articles on transport by Mr. T.J. Garrod. The Waveney Clarion costs 10p and is sold by many newsagents in North East Suffolk and South East Norfolk. You can also get it direct from Ruth Sparksman, 13 Wollaston Rd., Lowestoft. An annual subscription costs £2 including postage.
4. Fulbourn station, near Cambridge, closed 10 years ago, had a temporary new lease of life recently, when trains from Ipswich terminated there in the aftermath of an accident on the main line.
5. A National Executive Committee delegation from the NUR recently visited the threatened railway concrete depot at Lowestoft (see last two Newsletters) and reported that the visit "led them to the conclusion that (the depot) could be retained and the potential at Lowestoft was much in evidence."

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