

RAILWAY INVIGORATION SOCIETY
EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH
NEWSLETTER No. 26

April/May 1978

Branch Secretary: Mr. T.J. Garrod, 15 Clapham Road, Lowestoft, Suffolk NR32 1RQ.
 (Phone 81721; or, at work, Norwich 28181, ex. 44)

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OVER 500 PEOPLE TRAVEL ON DEREHAM SPECIAL TRAINS

At 11.45 on Saturday April 8th, a special 6-coach train, made up of three 2-car diesel multiple units, left platform 1 at Norwich, the first passenger train to Dereham since 1969. The train, chartered by the RIS and the Wymondham Dereham & Fakenham Rail Action Committee as part of our campaign for the re-opening of the line to passengers, carried over 200 people. A further dozen boarded at Wymondham, after which the train had to reverse from the up to the down line, thanks to recent track simplification (removal of the diamond crossover), before proceeding along the freight-only branch to Dereham. The guard operated the level crossing gates, stops were made at Kimberley Park, Thuxton (where a party of 20 ramblers alighted) and Yaxham, before the train drew into Dereham at 13.06. A party of 70 members of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain, who had travelled from London to experience this line, then changed from train to coach for a trip to Sheringham.

Dereham station and its approaches had been smartened up by the party of WyDFRAC and RIS members a fortnight previously. 330 passengers - a capacity load - joined the special for its trip back, leaving at 13.30 and - despite a 10 minute wait at Thuxton because it was ahead of schedule - arriving back in Norwich at 15.01.

After two hours in the city for shopping and sightseeing, the passengers were back for the departure at 17.06, reaching Dereham at 18.23. The final run through the gathering dusk was the fastest - leaving Dereham at 19.10, back in Norwich at 20.13 - a fine end to a memorable day, in which we provided a public service as well as an enjoyable and interesting trip for over 500 people.

Tribute must be paid to the teamwork of all those WyDFRAC and RIS members who helped in a variety of ways, before and on the day, and especially to Mr. John Hull, WyDFRAC secretary, for his extremely capable overall organisation. We should also like to thank the local British Rail management and staff, who were so helpful throughout the venture.

A film of the trip was made by Mr. R.B. Whipps; and an on-train survey was organised by Mr. B.D. Woodgett. We look forward to seeing the results of both in due course.

NEXT R.I.S. MEETING - CAMBRIDGE, SATURDAY MAY 13th

Our Spring meeting will be held in the Kennedy Room of the Cambridge Union Society, on Saturday May 13th at 2.00 p.m.

After a short business meeting, we shall welcome Mr. R.P. Stratford, BR's new Divisional Commercial Manager, who will be speaking on British Rail's Freight Role, with special reference to East Anglia. Mr. Stratford will also be showing a film and answering questions.

The Union Society's premises are in the centre of Cambridge. From the Railway station, walk into the city centre (or take 180 or 181 bus), then along Sidney Street, turning right at the Round Church.

If you are travelling to Cambridge from Norwich, Ipswich or beyond, it will pay you to do so on a One-Day Anglia Ranger, for just £2.30.

EXHIBITION

The RIS exhibition will next be shown, in co-operation with the East Suffolk Travellers' Association, at the Public Library, Blyburgate, Beccles, from Monday June 26th until Saturday July 15th.

NEW R.I.S. PUBLICATION? From the people who brought you "Can Bus Replace Train", the next publication could be "A Guide for Rail Users' Groups". The RIS is considering publication of a modest booklet with this title, and a first draft has already been written.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, IPSWICH TOWN HALL, JANUARY 29th

There was an attendance of 40, and 13 apologies for absence, at the Annual General Meeting of the East Anglian Branch of the RIS.

In his address, the Chairman, Mr. P.R. Lawrence, reviewed the past year's railway developments in the region, pointing out that several things for which the Society had been pressing for some time had become reality in 1977. He mentioned in particular several instances of new freight traffic as a result of grants under section 8 of the 1974 Railways Act; the Norwich - Birmingham hauled trains; and the revised timetable on the Sheringham line.

Looking forward to 1978, Mr. Lawrence stressed the need to continue to press for rail improvements; and to monitor the effects of domestic air routes serving East Anglia, and any effect these might have on rail investment. He also called for a determined effort by local authorities to act on their frequently discussed proposals for rail halts at places like Suffield Park and Cornard.

The Secretary, in his Annual Report, announced a further growth in membership of the Branch, from 73 to 89 during the course of 1977. There were also now some 15 local users' associations and action committees associated with us. Mr. Garrod reviewed the work of the branch and its associated bodies during the year, and thanked all members for their support in varying ways.

"We should aim at least to top 100 members in 1978," he concluded. "We should aim to increase well-informed public involvement in transport matters. We should aim to counter even more effectively those vested interests which stand in the way of, and try to run down, what we seek: a modern, efficient, attractive rail network playing the greater role that it ought to play in our transport system".

Elections were: Chairman: Mr. P.R. Lawrence
Vice-Chairman: Mr. F.I.S. Carter
Secretary: Mr. T.J. Garrod
Committee: Messrs. K.O. Cutmore, D.J. Jasper,

C.J. Milnes, C.W. Taylor and S.F. Wilkinson. Messrs. B. Woolsey and S.J. Hammond kindly offered to help with newsletter distribution and the exhibition respectively; and Mr. P. Wakefield subsequently kindly offered to take the minutes of meetings. At the Branch Committee meeting on March 18th, he was therefore co-opted as Minutes Secretary.

During the ensuing discussion of national and local issues a resolution was proposed by Mr. K.O. Cutmore, and carried nem con, that petrol tax be increased and road fund reduced or abolished, as this would tax car usage rather than car ownership. Members were urged to press this idea wherever possible.

It was reported that cycles could not be carried free on HST or certain suburban trains; the former would convey them for half fare if there was room; the newer suburban trains (e.g. Kings Cross electrics) were designed for one-man operation. (However, our member Mr. G.R. Burgess has since reported seeing cycles carried in the passenger section of Great Northern electric units!) It was agreed to refer the whole matter to the National Committee.

Townsend Thorensen passengers at Felixstowe were being taken by coach to and from London, and traffic would be increasing from March 9th with the start of a new service to Rotterdam. Several members said this strengthened the case for boat trains to Felixstowe Dock - but it was also pointed out that Townsend Thorensen was the chief competitor of Sealink (BR's Continental division)!

RAIL BARGAINS!!! SPREAD THE WORD AMONG YOUR FRIENDS AND ACQUAINTANCES...

One-Day Anglia Ranger - £2.30. A welcome re-introduction of last year's experiment, from March 1st till October 31st. In effect, a Day Return between any two stations, by any route, in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambs. (as far as March.)

Anglia Ranger £6.00 - seven days' travel in the above-mentioned area.

Merrymakers - Cheddar Gorge, Scarborough, Brighton, Loch Lomond, Barmouth, Yorkshire Dales, Edinburgh, Portsmouth and many other destinations figure among these popular BR specials. Leaflet enclosed.

SUDBURY - MARKS TRY RAIL USERS' ASSOCIATION

The association published its second newsletter in February and, on March 15th, held its AGM in Sudbury Town Hall, which was attended by 40 people.

Tribute was paid to Mr. B. Tomlin, founder secretary, who had now moved from the area; and, in a slight reshuffle, the following were elected; Chairman - Mr. M.J. Davies; Vice-Chairman - Mr. D. Phillips; Secretary - Mrs. E. Capes; Treasurer - Mr. B. Tolputt. Membership at the end of the first year of operation stood at 152. An attractive poster has been produced to help boost both line usage and association membership; and it is planned to display this, together with a dispenser for BR leaflets, membership forms etc., in local shops and public places.

Mr. T.J. Garrod, speaking on behalf of the RIS, praised the association for achieving such a good membership in a short time - this proved, he added, that there had been a need for such a body on the line. Representatives of the NUR and ASLEF, plus the Assistant Area Manager of BR, who also attended the meeting, expressed their support for what SMTRUA was doing.

A regular winter survey of passengers on the line had revealed a fall from 1021 weekly in 1972 to 885 weekly in 1977 - most of this drop occurring 1972-4, after which it had become less.

The need to encourage more off-peak usage of the line was a recurring theme in the discussion. It was reported that BR were running excursions to Gainsborough and Constable Country from London this summer: passengers would use a scheduled train to Colchester and then be taken by bus to Sudbury and other places in the area. Surely passengers could go by train all the way to Sudbury, in the heart of Gainsborough Country, and be met by bus from there?

Several members suggested encouragement to shoppers to use off-peak trains to Colchester, with a special cheap through ticket to St. Botolphs, the station in the centre of Colchester. Ideally, off-peak trains from Sudbury should run through to St. Botolphs, but as that station only had one platform it might not be able to accommodate them. Mr. Airey, Assistant Area Manager, said it might be possible to improve connections between Sudbury trains and the electrics serving St. Botolphs, at Colchester mainline station. The union representatives said they would also raise these matters through the Local Departmental Committee.

SUDBURY STATION DEVELOPMENT

The BR Property Board and the CWS have been proposing the use of the former railway goods depot site for a hypermarket, but this plan was turned down by Babergh District Council on March 15th. The RIS Branch Committee decided to write to the District Planning Officer, supporting the Council's decision, and urging the discussion of "ways of using this land that will be more advantageous to the travelling public. In particular, we should now like to see serious consideration given to the idea, often talked about, of resiting Sudbury railway station on this land, as near as possible to the existing bus station and the town centre, as part of a general strategy of improving an area of the town that is potentially attractive but currently run-down."

Local ideas of suitable use for the existing station building include as a museum and as changing facilities for sportsmen in connection with Friars Meadow playing fields.

MANNINGTREE RAIL USERS' ASSOCIATION MONITORS TIMEKEEPING

The latest newsletter of this association states, "1977 was better than 1976 over a sample of 400 or so journeys, delays averaging 5.4 minutes as against 6.6 in 1976. However... there will, we fear, be little improvement in overall timekeeping until large amounts of capital investment are pushed the way of Liverpool St. services. Our New Year resolution is ... to press for a re-allocation of priorities in capital investment. HSTs to Penzance are fine, but not when signalmen at Liverpool St. perform miracles operating trains on 2-minute headways on obsolete and worn-out signalling equipment."

NORFOLK STRUCTURE PLAN

On February 1st, Messrs. T.J. Garrod and J.S. Hull took part in the Examination in Public on the Communications section of this Plan and, in common with a number of other participants, criticised the County Council for not giving enough emphasis to public transport. The RIS has ordered a copy of the transcript of the day's hearings, which should be received very shortly and will be available for members to borrow from the Branch Secretary.

RYBURGH - FAKENHAM: TWO YEARS' GRACE

Representatives of the RIS and WyDFRAC took part in a special meeting of Norfolk County Council's Highways & Transportation Sub-committee on February 6th to discuss the future of freight services to Fakenham, in view of the consideration being given by BR to the closure of the $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles from Ryburgh (see Newsletter No. 24).

BR Divisional Manager Mr. Gordon Clarke told the meeting that he estimated this would save BR about £4,000 on operating costs. He was pressed by RIS and WyDFRAC representatives to look at whether economies of operation elsewhere on the system could not be introduced to save that sort of money; and to look at ways of increasing the amount of freight handled at Fakenham. It was also reported that the amount of time spent by the daily freight train at Fakenham had recently been cut by an hour. The main traffic currently handled at Fakenham is coal which, it was stated by one councillor, was most unsuitable for long-distance road haulage, not only because of the nuisance to people living along the route, but also to other road users.

(Since the meeting we have heard of a Melton Constable scrap merchant interested in loading scrap for Birmingham on to the train at Fakenham, and are investigating further.)

Mr. Clarke gave the meeting an assurance that, if the end of the line were to be closed, the track would be left in position for two years "unless anything radically changes", and that BR would welcome any opportunity of increasing their freight there.

AYLSHAM & DISTRICT RAIL ACTION COMMITTEE

ADRAC held its Annual General Meeting on March 1st, when Mr. J. McCarter was re-elected chairman, and Mr. C.F.C. Brenan treasurer. The new secretary is Mr. J. Coton, 18 Aylsham Road, Cawston.

Tribute must be paid to Mr. B.F. Bryant, ADRAC's secretary for its first two years, who has now moved from Aylsham, and who worked so hard to build up such an efficient and well-supported committee.

RIS Branch Chairman Mr. P.R. Lawrence addressed the meeting, speaking of developments on the railway scene in East Anglia over the past year; and Mr. M. Ferris (Norfolk County Council Labour Group spokesman on transport) spoke on the problems of rural transport.

ADRAC is now beginning detailed planning of its special train on September 16th. Fares are likely to be: Norwich - Lenwade & return £1.50; Norwich - Reepham & return £1.25; Norwich - Aylsham & return £1.00. Some local journeys on the line, e.g. Aylsham - Reepham, will also be possible. Full details should be available by the beginning of June.

The Wisbech special train on September 9th will also shortly be the object of detailed planning, with publicity to start in earnest in June.

Provisional fares are: March - Wisbech and return 50p; Wisbech - Cambridge & return £1.50. We have asked BR if the return trip from Cambridge could be timed so as to enable Wisbech people to attend the matinee performance at the Cambridge Arts Theatre, as several have expressed an interest in this. An afternoon coach trip for those arriving in Wisbech by the first train, and leaving by the last one (as at Dereham) is also being considered.

Welsh Interest in Re-openings

We have received a request (and an offer of payment) from the Transport Policy Intelligence section of the Welsh Office for copies of "By Rail to Fakenham?", "By Rail to Aylsham?" and our 1975 submission on the March - Wisbech re-opening proposal.

TRUNK ROADS, MOTORWAYS - AND THE ALTERNATIVES

Fifty people filled the Sexton Room at Norwich Assembly House on March 17th for a meeting on this topic, organised jointly by the RIS, Transport 2000, the Conservation Society and Friends of the Earth, chaired by Mr. P.R. Lawrence.

Mr. T.J. Garrod began by outlining the environmental case against major road-building. He said that the RIS, four years ago, had expressed support for the completion of the Norwich outer ring road, but questioned the need for a multi-million-pound Southern By-pass as well. Rail alternatives which should be considered included the extension of Speedlink and Freightliner trains into the area; main line electrification; more private sidings; increasing the capacity of the two single lines to Yarmouth (from Brundall and Reedham), possibly by doubling; reinstating the rail link to Yarmouth Quay; and, for holiday traffic, a seasonal Motorail service to Yarmouth and extension of Golden Rail to other resorts.

Mrs. A.P. Moon spoke of her experiences as an objector to the Ipswich By-pass. Ipswich people, she said, had simply been given a choice between the present traffic situation and a by-pass; they had never been asked whether they thought any of the present road traffic should be on rail or water. She accused pro-road vested interests of cynically exploiting a fatal accident and raising false hopes by oversimplifying issues; and the Department of Transport of misleading the public over matters such as noise levels.

Guest speaker Mr. John Tyme began by recounting how he had come to be involved in so many road inquiries since 1973; and why he believed that objectors should not allow inquiries to take place under the present system, quoting an inspector who had admitted, "The public can never obtain enough information to object to road schemes." Road inquiries as carried out at present, added Mr. Tyme, had "nothing to do with law or information - only with power". The "most harrowing" inquiry he had attended had been at Belfast, where it was proposed to knock down 4,000 houses to make way for a road.

However, he and other objectors had gained some victories, notably at Winchester, by sheer force of numbers; and the M42 inquiry, where they had succeeded in establishing that the Department of Transport ought to put up evidence of the alleged need for a motorway.

At the M16 inquiry he had been told by the inspector to go and read Hansard, for this was a matter for Parliament. "So I went and worked through 200 volumes of Hansard," said Mr. Tyme, "and found that Parliament had never authorised the road programme." Indeed, the Government, on its own admission, (1976 Green Paper) had no transport policy, and corruption in the Department of Transport was "probably greater than in any other government department in the civilised, industrialised world".

What was needed, explained Mr. Tyme, was a Transport Directorate, to which the British Railways Board, the Waterways Board, a Roads Board etc. would make regular submissions; as should a Parliamentary Select Committee on Transport and consumer and interest groups. This Directorate would regularly formulate a National Transport Policies & Programme (rather like the County TPPs), which would go through Parliament to become a Transport Act, to be put into effect by the Transport Directorate. "Once we get this," he concluded, "we'll get some sense, humanity and sanity into our transport system."

Questioned on the recently published Leitch Report on Trunk Road Assessment, Mr. Tyme said its most significant recommendation was that a comparison be made between road investment and the possible investment into alternatives to a road scheme, and the benefits thereof. We should demand that such a comparative study be produced at all future road inquiries.

After further useful discussion, the following resolution was carried nem con: "This meeting agrees that until the Department of Transport is reconstructed there can be no genuine transport planning in Great Britain, and urges that a Parliamentary Select Committee be set up as a first step." It was also agreed that the four organising bodies would discuss the Norwich By-pass proposal further with their members, and consider a further informal meeting later this year.

ELECTRIC TRAINS TO CAMBRIDGE IN 1980?

This was the prediction made by BR Divisional Manager Mr. Gordon Clarke at the beginning of February. (C.E.N. 6.2.78) It was stated that preliminary work on the scheme, between Cambridge and Bishops Stortford and Royston, involving new signalling and trackwork, would start this year. Government approval to the scheme was expected shortly, but should be just a formality.

This is good news for the city council and bodies like the RIS and Cambridge Rail Action Group, who have for some time been pressing for the electric wires from Kings Cross and Liverpool St. to be extended to Cambridge.

Teething Troubles?

Connections at Royston between the refurbished diesel multiple unit service from Cambridge and the new electrics have not been as reliable as they might, however - a point which the RIS and CRAG had warned about when stressing the importance of electrifying the entire line. One commuter from Shepreth complained that on five occasions in just over a week he had travelled on the shuttle service from Shepreth to Royston, only to find the connecting electric service had already left. Let us hope things improve. Local people held a meeting in Shepreth on March 21st to put their grievances to BR's Divisional Commercial Manager.

WEST NORFOLK PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS

The AGM of WNPTU was held at Kings Lynn on Saturday April 1st, when Mr. R. Callaby was elected chairman; Mr. D. Pitt Vice-chairman; Miss C. Zilahi Secretary and Miss I. McNello treasurer. Membership had risen to 50 during the year.

Mr. Spalding, the local ECOC superintendant, gave a short talk about the operations of the National Bus Company and answered questions about local services and facilities.

Mr. T.J. Garrod spoke on the railways' prospects in the light of government policy and BR's own policies and achievements; and the important role of the RIS and its associated local groups acting in the consumer interest.

The lack of bus connections at Downham station was again discussed. ECOC's Traffic Manager had been approached by WNPTU in 1977 and promised to look into the matter - but nothing had materialised. Now that improved bus/rail connections had been proposed for North Walsham, it was agreed that the time was ripe to press Downham's case once more.

LINCOLNSHIRE STRUCTURE PLAN

The RIS has submitted comments on this Plan, emphasising the need for the future development of the county to take maximum advantage of its rail network and suggesting ways in which this can be done. Most of the work in drafting our comments was done by Mr. S.F. Wilkinson, from whom some spare copies are available. (Send stamped addressed foolscap envelope.)

Mr. Wilkinson and Miss C. Zilahi represented the RIS at a Seminar on Public Transport held at Riseholme, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles outside Lincoln on February 23rd. The following extracts are from Mr. Wilkinson's report of the seminar:

"After frantic searching through bus and rail timetables it proved impossible to reach the venue by the appointed hour using public transport... A BR spokesman from Doncaster said all railway lines in Lincolnshire get government grants and he hoped they would continue... When I rose to speak the Chairman of the meeting asked, 'Will you be long?' As soon as I had finished the meeting was closed without further comment... In answer to my question, only 5 people out of about 80 present said they had made even part of their journey there by public transport... The session planned for the afternoon never took place! ... If this attitude to a serious matter is similar to other Council Departments, then I trust the electorate of Lincolnshire will make amends at their next elections."

One would have expected better things of Lincolnshire, which not so long ago re-opened two stations and helped subsidise the Peterborough - Spalding line.

BRECKLAND LINE USERS' ASSOCIATION

The Committee met on March 1st and decided to ask BR if the 12.36 ex Norwich train could make an extra stop at Spooner Row. Several people in the village had requested this, as it would enable them to do a morning's shopping or other business in Wymondham and be more convenient than the bus alternative.

BLUA plans to issue its next newsletter when the new timetable comes out in May.

NORTH WALSHAM BUS/RAIL CO-ORDINATION

Eastern Counties are proposing to re-time buses in the Mundesley area so that four daily connections with the trains at North Walsham will be possible, not just one as at present.

ECOC Traffic Manager Mr. J. Madgett also told the EDP (23.2.78) that he hoped to produce a leaflet jointly with BR about this improvement, and possibly a through fare arrangement and a communication system to hold the train if the bus is late and vice versa.

FLASHING LIGHTS AT DEREHAM

The gates at Yaxham Road level crossing, on the outskirts of Dereham, were removed on February 15th and replaced by train-actuated traffic light signals. As a train approaches, a five-second steady amber light is displayed, followed by a flashing red signal. Motorists must stop on amber, unless it is unsafe to do so, and must not pass the red light in any circumstances.

M&GNJRS SPECIAL TRAINS

The Midland & Great Northern Joint Railway Society is running special trains from Yarmouth (calling at Norwich, Thetford, Ely, Cambridge, Harlow Town and (in some cases) Wymondham and Attleborough, to Folkestone (Sunday July 16th), Cornwall (weekend 6th - 8th October) and Kent (for Father Christmas, and Kent & East Sussex Railway) (2nd December) For full details of these and other tours, write to M&GNJRS (Tours) Ltd., 11 Blenheim Close, Norwich, NR7 8AN.

RURAL TRANSPORT & ACCESSIBILITY

The team led by Dr. Malcolm Moseley at UEA has now published its findings in a 2-volume report, available at £4.80 per volume, from Centre of East Anglian Studies, University of East Anglia, Norwich, NR4 7TJ. Rather expensive - but how about asking your local library to get a copy?

BACK COPIES OF BRANCH NEWSLETTERS

The Branch Secretary keeps a file of all East Anglian Branch Newsletters since the first one in February 1972. These are frequently used by members and others for research etc. There is only one copy of No. 12, and one copy of No. 21 on file. If any member has a spare copy of either of these, which they would be willing to part with, could they let the Branch Secretary know?

STUDENT RAILCARD

BR have introduced a new Student Railcard for 14-17 year olds at a cost of £7, valid until September 30th. Holders are able to buy Awaydays at half price at weekends and on holidays; and ordinary singles and returns at half price subject to a £1.50 minimum (single) and £3 minimum (return). A welcome innovation - but with rather a lot of restrictions.

SUFFOLK COUNTY COUNCIL TRANSPORT POLICIES & PROGRAMME 1979/80

The RIS was sent a copy of the First Draft of this TPP, and our Comments on it, issued on April 11th, express concern that the proportion of County Council spending on public transport support is being allowed to decline from just under 5% to about 3.2% in two years; and that not a penny appears to be being allocated to rail services. We point out that one new rail halt could be built for less than 1% of one year's proposed capital expenditure on transport. Restraint on long-term car-parking in town centres - suggested in the TPP - should be coupled with public transport improvements, we urge.

On freight, a useful table of applications for section 8 grants supported by the council in the last three years is included.

For a copy of our full comments, send a foolscap s.a.e. to Branch Secretary.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

We welcome more new members:

Mr. L.J. Buckingham, 25 Drury Road, COLCHESTER, CO2 7UY.

Miss G.I. Seymour, Wendy House, 46 Crown Street, LOWESTOFT, Suffolk.

West Norfolk Public Transport Users, 31 Wimbotsham Road, DOWNHAM MARKET, Nfk.

Please note also change of address: Mr. F.R. Melvin, 30 Spring Close, Histon, Cambridge.

IN THE MEDIA

RIS members Messrs. D. Maudlin and T.J. Garrod were among a group of people in the studio putting questions to BR Divisional Manager Mr. Gordon Clarke on March 31st on Anglia TV's "Probe" programme.

Mr. Garrod was also interviewed on Radio Orwell on March 7th, giving the RIS' reactions to the news that Felixstowe Dock & Railway Company had just been awarded an £85,000 Government grant, under the 1974 Railways Act, for improving rail freight facilities at the port.

IN BRIEF

1. BR has been pressed by the Economic Development Committee for International Freight Movement to step up its investment in rail ferry services from Harwich to the Continent; the committee being concerned about the economic and environmental effects if this is not done. ("The Telegraph", January 1978)

2. Breydon Junction signal box, near Yarmouth, has closed, and the line from there to the station entrance operates now as two parallel single tracks (as at Cromer). Hopefully this will not have an adverse effect on busy summer Saturdays.

3. Regular and sizeable quantities of grain have been a noticeable part of BR freight at Lowestoft harbour since the beginning of the year.

4. Suggestions by Suffolk County Surveyor Mr. E. Williams on how to stop noisy juggernauts from parking in quiet villages overnight were described by a councillor representing Capel St. Mary as "one big laugh". Mr. Williams had said that the County Council had powers but "did not like to use them". (EADT 2.3.78.)

5. A resolution calling for a road inquiry procedure that takes into account the rail alternative and the effects on energy and agriculture (similar to that passed by the RIS national AGM last year) will be on the agenda of the National Conference of the National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers, thanks to the efforts of our member Mr. S.F. Wilkinson, whose county conference of the union voted for it unanimously.

6. Mr. L.G. Hipperson reports that, while welcoming the introduction of ordinary coaching stock on the Norwich - Birmingham trains, he was concerned about the dirty state of those which he used on March 10th and 13th. Any other member with comments, favourable or unfavourable, on the state of these trains, especially since March 13th, should let the Branch Secretary have them as soon as possible.

7. The RIS National Committee has applied to the Rowntree Social Service Trust for a grant to help towards the cost of rail users' association newsletters and similar publications.

8. Cambridge and Ipswich Young Conservatives recently heard talks on the case for rail transport from Messrs. D. Maudlin and T.J. Garrod respectively. Members are reminded that the RIS is always pleased to provide speakers for meetings of other organisations.

9. We have received a copy of the Archway Road objectors' complaint to the Ombudsman - a lengthy document, but interesting reading. If you would like to borrow it send 10p for postage to the Branch Secretary.

In the next newsletter we hope to report on two meetings taking place on April 22nd: a conference at Stowmarket on Community Organisations and the Media (at which Mr. F.R. Melvin is representing the RIS) and the AGM of the East Suffolk Travellers' Association at Halesworth.