

Branch Chairman: Mr. S.F. Wilkinson, 52 Manor Park, Histon, Cambridge, CB4 4JT
(Tel: 3981)

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

1983: WATERSHED YEAR

"1983 is a watershed of a year," wrote BR Chairman Sir Peter Parker in an article in the "Director" magazine in November. If the Government does not make more cash available this year, to renew ageing trains and equipment, and allow lines to be properly maintained, cuts in services could be forced on BR - and that means some secondary lines, like most in East Anglia, could face closure proposals.

RDS Branch Chairman Steve Wilkinson, interviewed by the "East Anglian Daily Times" (23-11-82) commented, "We are not really surprised about the statement... Our Society has said for a number of years that if investments are not made, the services will crumble".

Watershed Year began with a fares increase - never good news - but it was the lowest average increase for over a decade, and followed an unusually long period of fare stability.

Watershed Year is also to see the first of a new generation of diesel multiple unit trains - class 141 - coming off the production line. These 20 units must, however, be seen as just the first drops of a steady stream of new trains being produced with some urgency from Watershed Year onwards.

Watershed Year also sees the first civil engineering work underway between Colchester and Ipswich, preparing for electrification in 1985. However, the continuing dispute between management and unions over the Bedford-St Pancras scheme plays into the hands of those politicians who do not favour investment in a modern railway. It gives them an excuse to do nothing - as, to some extent, does the Serpell Report, issued, after a series of leaks, on January 20th.

The Serpell Report was, to put it mildly, a disappointment and a delaying tactic. RDS Branch Secretary Trevor Garrod, interviewed on BBC Television's "Look East" on January 20th, called it "narrow, negative and unimaginative". Apart from suggestions that the Government should tell BR to put up season tickets by 40%, and that buses could replace trains (as they largely failed to do in the 1960s), the report simply looks at six options showing varying degrees of cuts in the network. There is no serious look at improvements.

A report that looked at the financing of all modes of transport could have been useful, especially if it also examined in depth the indirect costs and benefits. As it is, having won the battle over flexible rostering last summer, the Government has introduced yet another diversion instead of coming to grips with the railways' problems.

However, Watershed Year is also quite probably Election Year - and certainly there will have to be a General Election within the next fifteen months. We in RDS therefore have to continue, and step up, our patient and informed lobbying of politicians of all parties; and the more people that we, and our associated users' groups represent, the more we are likely to be listened to. The most drastic set of Serpell cuts - leaving East Anglia with just the Norwich - London line and the East Coast Main Line - would probably be politically unacceptable to any party seeking election. We must work to ensure that even more "moderate" cuts are unacceptable.

BRING BACK THE TRAINS - if attack is the best form of defence, then a fairly modest expansion of the network, as proposed by RDS' forthcoming book of this title, will provide a good reply to Serpell. The book can be ordered now from Mr. D.J. Jasper, 14 Kelly Road, Ipswich, IP2 0JU at £1.50 including postage.

POPULATION in the Huntingdon District of Cambs is growing faster than in any other part of the county (CEN 23-12-83). Fastest individual growers were St Neots (15,205 to 21,330 in 10 years) and St Ives (7,147 to 12,510). All the more reason for some priority to be given to electrifying the main line from Hitchin at Huntingdon (at least) and eventual restoration of a passenger service to St Ives.

CHRISTMAS SHOPPING SPECIALS

On December 4th, a special DMU 4-car train ran from Sheringham to Peterborough. Chartered jointly by RDS and the North East Norfolk Travellers' Association, it carried 185 people, calling at all stations from Sheringham to Norwich and then operating non-stop to Peterborough.

The trip took advantage of the fact that Peterborough's modern station is just a stone's throw from the impressive new Queensgate Shopping Centre - where our passengers were able to spend up to 5 hours. Indeed, BR themselves have also exploited this situation, with attractive day-return fares to attract shoppers from a variety of destinations in the western part of our region.

The whole excursion went without a hitch. Thanks are due not only to BR but to RDS member and NENTA Secretary Mr. R.B. Davies, who was chief organiser, ably assisted by his family and Messrs. N. Buxton, T. Moore and C. Lee. RDS has now been involved in running three special trains off the Broads Line for local people in 1982 - whereas previously the only excursions on this line, for several years, had been to bring people from elsewhere to the Broads or North Norfolk Coast.

On the same day, our corporate member the East Suffolk Travellers' Association had planned to run an Inter-City special from Lowestoft to Milton Keynes - a destination being served by a number of coach excursions from the area. Bookings reached 106, which was however insufficient to justify a special train of this type. Customers were therefore offered their money back or a party trip by scheduled train.

Thus 53 of them boarded a reserved coach on the 0722 Lowestoft - London through train, with two ESTA committee members acting as couriers, and enjoyed a smoothly-connecting succession of Eastern Region, London Underground and Midland Region trains and Milton Keynes City bus, with nearly 5 hours at the shopping centre.

SUFFOLK PUBLIC TRANSPORT PLAN

Since 1978, County Councils have been required to produce an annual Public Transport Plan - a task which some of them approach with greater willingness and seriousness than others.

The latest Suffolk document is one of the less inspiring ones, with little in the way of new ideas and apparently nothing in the way of commitment to improve the county's rail services.

The RDS comments submitted on this Plan at the beginning of January therefore reminded the Council of points we had made, and questions we had asked, the previous year (and which had gone unanswered). We also enclosed a copy of our recently-published leaflet on Watton-at-Stone station, so that the gentlemen in County Hall could see what their colleagues in Hertfordshire had helped to achieve.

In our comments, we also asked whether the Council had held any discussions with BR over the implications of main-line electrification; especially the possibility of extra halts and the rumoured singling of track north of Haughley Junction.

We also asked the Council to state whether or not it supported cuts in services, and not merely to report these; and whether it accepted the "need" for limited-stop bus services in competition with rail services.

On a more positive notice, we welcomed the Council's support for the proposed East Suffolk Line modernisation and hoped to see it "playing a part in educating people to accept simpler level crossings and pressing the Government for the necessary investment".

WENSUM CURVE: Great Yarmouth Borough Council is pursuing its case against the British Railways Board for closing the Wensum Curve without public consultation. An appearance before a judge in chambers in early December resulted in the Council being given leave to take its case to the High Court. Lawyers acting for BR have requested an adjournment, but a hearing is now expected within weeks.

SERVICES THROUGH BURY ST EDMUNDS: The Branch Committee will discuss these at its next meeting, following a detailed submission by Mr. J. Asquith and comments by Mr. J.C. Baker. Connections from Colchester and Clacton to the Midlands and North will also be featured. Full report in next newsletter.

FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday February 12th: RDS National Committee, London.

Saturday February 19th: RDS PUBLIC MEETING AT COLCHESTER, in the Central Library, at 2.00pm on THE FUTURE OF RAIL SERVICES IN ESSEX.

We are pleased that Mr. Gordon Pettitt, BR Divisional Manager at Liverpool St, has accepted our invitation to address this meeting; which will cover all aspects of rail services, passenger and freight, in his Division. Major issues will, of course, be the reliability of commuter services; the pattern of main line and Harwich services once electrification is completed; the future of DMU-operated lines to Sudbury and Southminster.

Colchester town centre can be reached by bus from the main line station; but the nearest station is St Botolphs, served by Clacton electric trains leaving the main station at 25 minutes past each hour. From St Botolphs, turn right up the hill, third left (Short Wyre Street), third right (Lion Walk), through the shopping precinct, then left into Trinity Square and the library is on the left. It is less than 10 minutes' walk.

Saturday February 26th: RDS/WyDRAC Public Meeting at Dereham, as part of the nationwide launch of "BRING BACK THE TRAINS" - RDS' book on rail reopenings. The meeting will be at 2.00pm in Trinity Methodist Hall, Theatre Street. Main speaker will be RDS National Vice-Chairman Mr. S.F. Wilkinson, followed by two railway films.

East Suffolk Travellers' Association AGM is due to be held in April, probably Saturday 9th in Saxmundham. Details will be available shortly from Branch Secretary and publicised locally.

Tuesday April 26th: ESTA (Felixstowe) Spring Meeting, 7.30pm St Andrews Church Hall, St Andrews Road, Felixstowe. Guest speaker - General Manager of Ipswich Borough Transport.

Saturday April 23rd: RDS National AGM, Crewe. (Full details will be sent out very shortly to all RDS members)

Saturday April 30th: THE SCOTSMAN: Our most ambitious special train so far. A 600-seater locomotive-hauled train will leave North Walsham at 0600 approx and pick up at Worstead, Wroxham, Salhouse and Norwich, before running to York, Durham and Edinburgh, due to draw into the Scottish capital at 1330 approx. It will return about 6 hours later, arriving back in Norfolk in the early hours of Sunday morning. The train, which is being chartered jointly by RDS and the North East Norfolk Travellers' Association, will have a buffet car. Over 50 bookings have already been received. Tickets are £12.50 (children £10.50) from Mr. R.B. Davies, 36 Lighthouse Close, Happisburgh, Norwich, NR12 0QE (Tel: 0692 - 650715). SAE please.

Saturday May 28th: RDS/WyDRAC joint special train, Dereham - Portsmouth Harbour (for HMS Victory, Mary Rose, Isle of Wight etc) This locomotive-hauled train will pick up at branch stations, Wymondham, Spooner Row (sic!) and Attleborough before travelling via Cambridge and West London to Portsmouth. WyDRAC's popular buffet will operate. Fare: £8.75 (children £5.90). Tickets from Mr. J.S. Hull, Cydonia Cottage, Station Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk (Tel: 5154). SAE please.

Saturday June 4th: RDS SPRING MEETING at 2.00pm in the Backhouse Room, YMCA, Gonville Place, CAMBRIDGE. (10 mins from station)

Sunday June 12th: ESTA Special Train from Lowestoft and all East Suffolk Line stations to Portsmouth Harbour. An Inter-City train with buffet, fare probably £8. Full details in next newsletter.

Sunday June 26th: RDS special train from Wisbech, March and Manea to Clacton-on-sea. Details in next newsletter.

Sunday July 31st: ESTA special, by DMU from Ipswich and all East Suffolk Line stations to Wroxham, Cromer and Sheringham.

Saturday September 3rd: THE WELSHMAN: RDS/NENTA special train from North Walsham and stations to Norwich, to Chester, Rhyl and Llandudno.

Saturday September 10th: RDS member Mr. S. Norton is planning a boat trip on the River Alde between Snape, Aldeburgh and Orford. This unusual trip, which includes bus transfer to and from Saxmundham rail station, is being arranged to

be convenient for participants from almost any rail-served town in East Anglia and will cost about £7. Full details in next newsletter - but if you are interested, please contact Mr. Norton at 6 Hertford Street, Cambridge, CB4 3AG. Saturday September 24th: RDS AUTUMN MEETING, 2.00pm Kent Room, Assembly House, Theatre Street, Norwich.

BR have again told us that the Civil Engineer is not prepared to allow a passenger excursion on the Swavesey line this year.

One or two other specials may be added to the above list, such as a DMU trip from Dereham to Clacton and one from Sudbury to Sheringham.

NEWS FROM THE DEREHAM LINE

Our corporate member the Fakenham & Dereham Railway Society plans to establish a steam centre at Hardingham, following the signing of a tenancy agreement for the station and goods yard by its associated Company.

The station is 5 miles from Wymondham, just off the B1135 road, with no public transport access. Over the next five years it is planned to renovate it, establishing a museum with a Great Eastern flavour and re-laying track in the goods yard. During this year, it is hoped to bring locomotives and rolling stock to the site.

Volunteers to help will be welcome, and should be F&DRS members. It costs £2 to join - contact Mr. Ian Jowett, "Cheniston", Market Place, East Harling, Norfolk (Tel: 717244).

The North Elmham - Ryburgh section has now been officially closed to freight - having had no traffic over it for some time.

Apart from the RDS/WyDRAC special (see p3), a further passenger train is expected to run on the line on July 14th or 15th, when local schools (who had previously bussed pupils to Wymondham to join BR specials) plan to charter a train to York.

The Wymondham - Dereham Rail Action Committee has just published another informative newsletter; and held a jumble sale in Wymondham on December 18th which raised over £30 for its funds. WyDRAC has also agreed to hold talks with F&DRS about future co-operation in the Hardingham project.

EAST SUFFOLK LINE MODERNISATION PLAN

In December, details of BR's modernisation proposals were sent by Waveney District Council to various Parish and Town Councils along the northern part of the line. In 1984/5, it is proposed to make 23 crossings open and automatic (though two of these may be closed completely), install radio signalling based at Saxmundham and close 5 signal boxes. These all seem acceptable ways of reducing renewal and operating costs, and are to be welcomed.

It is, however, also proposed to single the track between Halesworth and Lowestoft, 17 miles, the section between Lowestoft station signal box and Oulton Broad Junction being two parallel single tracks similar to that between Yarmouth station and the former Breydon box. This would make Lowestoft - Halesworth the longest stretch of single-track passenger line in East Anglia. Inquiries by RDS and ESTA elicited the information that it was not felt necessary to have even a passing loop at Beccles.

Must the line, in fact, be singled? Is this an unavoidable part of the modernisation? What proportion of the total savings would be attributable to the track singling? If the track is to be singled, should there not at least be a passing loop at Beccles, to increase operating flexibility and minimise delays?

RDS and ESTA have made these points in submissions to Waveney District Council and letters to the local press. Beccles Town Council has taken a similar stand.

Information has also reached us that BR are again considering singling from Lowestoft to Reedham, but that a long passing loop would be left at Somerleyton; where, to balance the swing-bridge mechanism, double track over it would have to be left. Oulton Broad swing bridge, however, would become a fixed span and so its track could be singled.

FOR SALE: RDS economy labels, 70p per 100; "Ten Years On" - our anniversary book, £1.20 inc postage. From Mr. P.R. Lawrence, 75 Marlpit Lane, Norwich, NR5 8XN.

EAST NORFOLK TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION

"There is more likely to be a railway to Yarmouth if the politicians are aware that there are people like yourselves campaigning for it".

This was the advice given by BR Divisional Passenger Manager Mr. Dennis Gibson when he spoke at the AGM of ENTA. Over 30 people filled the meeting room at Acle Recreation Centre on January 15th for this meeting.

Mr. Gibson explained BR's position in running a business which had to keep within strict Government financial limits. Electrification of the main line would bring Norwich to within 100 minutes, and ultimately 90 minutes, of London. If the Government gave the go-ahead for radio-signalling on the East Suffolk Line, and this project was successful, it would be followed by similar schemes on the Wherry and Broads Lines. Another, less ambitious, improvement being planned was a modernised telephone inquiry bureau at Norwich.

Mr. Gibson also answered a wide range of questions on the off-peak fares experiment, bus competition, "Saver" and "Ranger" tickets and aspects of the current Wherry Line timetable.

Earlier, ENTA Chairman Mr. W.J.H. Apsey had reported on the association's own discussions with BR on the timetable. They had succeeded in getting the 0945 Norwich - Yarmouth train re-instated, and similarly the 1653 Norwich - Yarmouth; but other services had been lost. They were also pressing for an all-year Saturday through train from London to Yarmouth (through services are promised for summer Saturdays in 1983).

Looking to the future, Mr. Apsey stressed that ENTA must keep up pressure for electrification to be extended ultimately from Norwich to Yarmouth and Lowestoft. Wires would have to be erected from Norwich as far out as Whitlingham Junction for operational reasons anyway.

Elected at the meeting were: Chairman - Mr. Apsey; Vice-Chairman Mr. M. Taylor; Secretary - Mr. P.C.W. Warner; Treasurer - Mr. E. Woodward; Committee - Messrs. M. Bradshaw, P. Goldring, S. Hewett, R. Northcott, S. Topasna, K. Watts.

SUDBURY - MARKS TEY RAIL USERS' ASSOCIATION:

SMTRUA has held useful discussions with the BR Area Manager and a local TUCC representative. The association has been assured that the Colne Valley Viaduct is guaranteed for the next 5-6 years. Maintenance costs about £10,000 a year. Essex County Council will be approached about possible erection of a steel crash barrier to protect the arches from traffic on the A604. Woodwork in Sudbury station canopy is rotten but BR hopes to re-clad the ironwork in lightweight steel. BR is reviewing the manned crossings at Mount Bures and Bakers Mill with a view to reducing them to open crossings. The Co-operative Society is being invited to take part in a promotion to encourage use of the branch to visit its hypermarket next to Sudbury station. SMTRUA has also negotiated substantial discounts for Season Ticket holders to London wishing to travel via Colchester instead of changing at Marks Tey. It is hoped that this discount will encourage more commuters to use the trains at weekends as well.

A further successful project was a competition run in conjunction with the Suffolk Free Press to find the best slogan for the line. The winner was "The Branchline - Our Lifeline". BR donated five £10 railcards as prizes. Such a competition could be suitable for other lines in our region.

ARCHIVES

Three years ago, Mr. L.G. Hipperson prepared a list of booklets, reports, press cuttings and other documents in the RDS East Anglian Branch archives, which are kept at his house. He proposes to issue an updated list at the end of February, and any members with items to donate should therefore contact him at: 16 Marsh View, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 9RT. (Tel: 713910)

The archives are very useful for members and non-members undertaking research into various issues.

Thanks also to Mr. Hipperson for compiling an up-to-date membership list of the Branch.

ANTI-CLOSURE FUND: Help RDS to fight any further rail closures that may be proposed. Send donations to Mr. M.J. Farahar, 35 Ashmere Grove, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 2RE.

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE ORWELL BRIDGE

The Orwell Bridge and the southern section of the Ipswich By-pass were opened on December 17th. The bridge itself cost £20,600,000 - not much less than the cost of electrifying the railway from Colchester to Norwich - and makes an impressive sight. Perhaps it is best viewed from the window seat of the Norwich-London Inter-City train storming up Belstead bank...

In the mid-70s, however, our Society questioned the need for such an extravagant road scheme and urged consideration of the rail alternative. Supporters of the By-pass launched an emotive and expensive "Save Lives" campaign (whose sources of income were never disclosed).

These claims that the new road would "save lives" appear to be contradicted by a forecast from Suffolk Police Head of Traffic, Chief-Supt Ward (EADT 16.12.82) "that with the opening of the Orwell Bridge and the bypass there would be a great increase in accidents in the area". He went on to explain that "this was because traffic in the urban area would go faster because there was less congestion".

Another prediction by Mr. Ward: "Next year 75 people will die in Suffolk on the roads, there is no doubt about it". During his 33 years police service in the county, 2310 people had died and 115,000 had been seriously injured. "If that is not wholesale slaughter and maiming, I do not know what is".

The human and financial cost of road accidents must be continually stressed by RDS in our campaign for increased investment in, and maximum use of, the rail network.

Have you read and made use of the RDS leaflet "Stop this highway robbery NOW!" - published twelve months ago and available from the Branch Secretary?

HEAVIER LORRIES ON THE WAY -

- but not as heavy as the roads lobby wanted? At the end of November, Parliament gave the go-ahead for 38-tonne juggernauts; which is a defeat for the environmental and pro-rail lobby, including of course RDS. However, the fact that the roads lobby did not get the 44-tonners for which they were originally pressing means that theirs is only a partial victory. It also means that we must be prepared for them to return in a year or two with demands for even bigger vehicles.

RDS has argued the case against heavier lorries for several years; and the last move by the East Anglian Branch, a week before the vote in Parliament, was to write to all 20 East Anglian MPs with a final appeal to vote against the measure. Most of the MPs did not reply. Those who did were Sir Julian Ridsdale, John Gummer, Jim Prior, John MacGregor, John Major, Keith Stainton and Sir Anthony Fell.

Our move gained some press publicity and the Branch Secretary was also interviewed on Radio Orwell.

PUTTING THE RDS CASE

The Branch Secretary was interviewed on the BBC Radio Norfolk Breakfast Programme on January 10th, about rail fares, investment and the Serpell Report. On December 14th, Mr. Garrod also spoke to a meeting of a Labour Party Study Group on Transport at County Hall, Ipswich. RDS is, of course, a non-party organisation, and is willing to provide speakers for meetings of any party or other organisation interested in hearing the pro-rail case.

Our Branch Vice-Chairman Mr. C.W. Taylor attended a meeting in Ipswich Town Hall on January 10th, called by BR to answer criticisms of the recent performance of the main-line service and was able to talk to the Divisional Manager.

Our member Mr. E.J. Graves had a letter published in the Cambridge Evening News in early January on the public transport alternative to the motor car.

PRESS CUTTINGS DIGEST: "There have been fatal accidents on Cambridgeshire roads almost daily since October 1st" - (Cambridge Evening News 2.11.82). Information like this can be useful when arguing against the more extravagant propaganda of the road lobby. A new digest of such quotes has been produced by RDS and is now available from Mr. A. Oldfield, 14 Long Lane, Worrall, Sheffield, S30 3AF. Please enclose SAE. Mr. Oldfield will welcome further press cuttings.

RAIL FARES IN EAST ANGLIA

Following discussion by the Branch Committee, the Branch Secretary wrote to BR's Norwich Divisional Passenger Manager, Mr. D.W. Gibson in November, expressing support in principle for the simplification of fares. The old system had become unduly complicated and it was now possible to obtain good value for money from the new Off-peak return on many longer journeys.

However, we expressed concern that the policy of not allowing the new cheap tickets on so many business trains from Norwich and Cambridge to London was unduly rigid and should be revised. We asked whether usage of these trains had been monitored since October 3rd, and whether any drop in the number of passengers had been recorded.

Mr. Gibson replied, "You will appreciate the present experimental fares restructuring experiment is being very carefully monitored and evaluated. We are receiving from our customers valuable comments/proposals as to this experiment and these together with your own will be considered in the final analysis".

Among the valuable comments received by Mr. Gibson were those of our member Mr. D. Pitt, who has to travel from Cambridge to London frequently on business, but not every day, and is unable to benefit from reduced rates. Other members with comments should either send them direct to Mr. Gibson at Grosvenor House, 112-4, Prince of Wales Road, Norwich, NR1 1NZ; or to the Branch Secretary, who will be corresponding further with BR on this matter shortly.

We also asked Mr. Gibson, as we have before, whether the Anglia Ranger facility could be extended to daily winter use (at present it is Saturdays only), but were told, "as these are primarily geared to the leisure/holiday market, I regret that at this point in time, especially having due regard to the aforementioned experiment, I am unable to extend them beyond their present limits".

BR NORWICH DIVISION TO DISAPPEAR

It has been announced that, probably in mid-1983, the Norwich Division of BR will disappear, and most lines in East Anglia will then come under the control of the Divisional Manager at Liverpool Street, while the March area will be transferred to Kings Cross.

RDS wrote to the Eastern Regional Manager, stating that, while we were not opposed to some streamlining of administration, if this helped to cut costs, we were worried that management in East Anglia could become more remote as a result, and less responsive to the needs of local passengers and freight customers.

We urged that, if the merger goes ahead, there should be "sufficient management presence in Norwich to ensure a level of promotion of services and responsiveness to the public comparable to that provided at present". In other words, are all but the most trivial matters concerning Sheringham to be dealt with by a gentleman sitting at a desk 130 miles away in London?

A reply from BR commented, "I cannot, of course, comment on our detailed proposals before we consult fully with our staff, but we are well aware of the need for specialist attention to be provided for local interests". Let us hope so.

FREIGHT FEELERS

Part of RDS' work entails drawing firms' attention to the potential of Rail-freight for moving their supplies and products, and supporting them if they apply for Government grants for this.

Our Branch Chairman has recently written to Marshland & Wingland Ltd., who may be using Wisbech for grain shipments; to Haughley Silos, who also plan to apply for a grant; and to Anglia Agricultural Merchants which is considering a grain silo at Ely.

The RDS Freight Sub-committee is also planning to write a leaflet on the advantages of rail freight.

FOR SALE Refurbished Simca 1100 van, 10 years old, new tyres, sills and other extras, recently serviced, nearly new rear bumper, repainted, blue and white Price: £180 ONO from our member Mr. C.J. Milnes, Kings Lynn 671637, between 7 and 10pm. Mr. Milnes will donate 15% of sale price to RDS funds.

RDS LOTTERY: Our Branch Chairman has just won £4 on this - but it's not a fiddle! - as you will find out if you apply to take part in this attractive monthly draw, which also raises much-needed funds for RDS. Contact Mr. I.G. Crighton, 19 Oakdale Avenue, Kenton, Harrow, Middx. HA3 0UJ.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

Welcome to more new members:

- 1 Mr. P. Smart, 33 Lower Brook St., Ipswich, Suffolk.
 - 2 Mrs I.D. Turner, 11 King John Avenue, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE30 4GB.
 - 3 Mr. P.I. Blackman, 1 Grove Cottages, Grove Road, Carlton Colville, Lowestoft, NR33 8HR.
 - 4 25 Club, c/o Mr. R. Allison, Lothingland Hospital, Union Lane, Oulton, Lowestoft, NR32 3AX.
 - 5 Mr. R.D. Lee, 3A Kingswood Road, Colchester, CO4 5JX.
 - 6 Mr. G.A. Knott, 2 Station Cottages, Eccles Road, Quidenham, Norwich, Norfolk.
 - 7 Mr. B.H. Holmes, 9 Ferndale Rise, Cambridge, CB5 8QG.
 - 8 Mr. C. Sell, Glebe Road, Barrington, Cambridge.
 - 9 Mrs M. Ward, 20 Hallidays Rd, Bluntisham, Huntingdon, Cambs. PE17 3LP.
- Mr. M.J. Womack has moved to 4 Grove Place, Bishops Stortford, Herts. CM23 3TE.

National Treasurer: It is with sadness that we report the sudden death, in October, of Mr. A.R. Macqueen, National Treasurer of RDS. Mr. Macqueen had performed this task with efficiency and good humour during a period which was not always easy financially for the Society. Our Branch Chairman was among those present at his funeral; and the Society has sent a donation in his memory to the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, a charity with which he was closely associated.

The new National Treasurer is Mr. M.J. Farahar, a member of the East Anglian Branch Committee, who kindly offered to step in the breach at quite short notice and whose appointment was agreed by the National Committee on November 13th.

BRANCHES & AREAS CONFERENCE

Representatives of 11 RDS Branches and Areas met in Derby on January 8th to assess the effect of Rail Development Week and its follow-up, learning that a record 192 new members joined the Society in 1982 and that there are now 825 on the books.

Two East Anglian Branch members attended the conference, which also dealt with ways of making our local organisation more effective, in view of the issues to which we are likely to have to respond during the coming year.

PATTERN OF RDS MEETINGS

The present pattern of Branch Meetings (Ipswich in January, Cambridge in May/June, Norwich in September) was established in 1975 - when our membership was little more than a quarter of its current size. Some members of the present committee feel that we should increase the number of regular meetings to four per year, of which three would still be in the major centres mentioned above, probably in early January, June and late September. In addition, there would be an Annual General Meeting during the month of March, the venue for which would be in a different one of the smaller East Anglian towns each year.

Members' comments are invited. The incoming Branch Committee will start planning the programme during the summer, and the new pattern would then start in January 1984. Meanwhile, suggestions are also invited for suitable speakers or topics for the Spring and Autumn Meetings of 1983.

HOW TO FIGHT A RAIL CUT: Three copies of this new RDS publication have been bought by the Department of Transport. Perhaps they are going to start opposing closures? Have you bought a copy yet? It costs just 35p including postage from the Branch Secretary.

TEN YEARS AGO: (From Branch Newsletter No. 5, March 1973) At the Branch AGM held on January 27th, 1973, guest speaker Dr. T. Gourvish described the recent growth in concern for the environment and the effect of transport policies upon it, saying there were now some 300 organisations around the country concerned in some way or another with these issues. At the same meeting, Mr. D. Maudlin reported a 26% increase in passengers using Newmarket station following the local users' groups publicity campaign. The Branch Secretary had written to BR expressing concern that they had had to turn away some grain traffic at Lowestoft and steel traffic at Lynn because of insufficient wagons.