

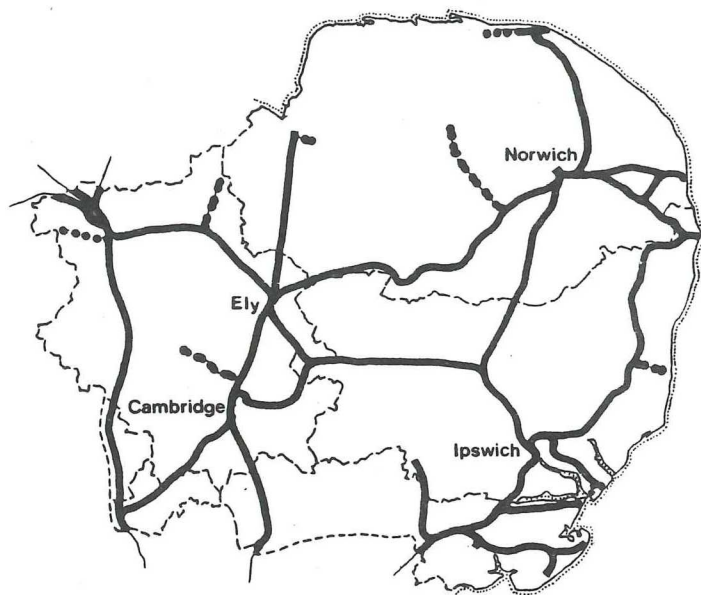
RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY



Rail East

Number 67
February 1989

Newsletter of the East Anglian Branch



35p

Free to members

Class 321 - New Trains for the Cambridge Line
Dereham Closure
TUCC Chairman Address

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY
East Anglian Branch

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The full Branch Committee meets at least four times a year.

Peter Lawrence, as Branch Membership Secretary, keeps up-to-date records of paid-up members, addresses, etc. The coding of the envelope containing this issue of *Rail East* tells you when your subscription is due. For instance, "89.07" means that you were due to renew on 1st July 1989.

The Railway Development Society is a national, independent, voluntary body representing rail users and campaigning for the retention, modernisation and greater use of rail transport for both passengers and freight. The East Anglian Branch covers Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, North Essex (as far south as Kelvedon and Bishop's Stortford), North Hertfordshire (as far south as Hitchin) and East Bedfordshire (Arlesey, Biggleswade and Sandy). To join RDS, please send £7.50 to the Membership Secretary, 49 Irmham Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 2TQ. Other rates on application.

Rail East: The Editor intends to produce three editions a year and the next edition will be published in June and any contributions should be submitted by May 20th. Material may also be sent on floppy disc in BBC or IBM format. The Editor particularly welcomes any information for the Diary column.

RAIL EAST

Number 67
February 1989

Newsletter of the RDS East Anglian Branch

Editor: Stephen Lawrence

From the Editor

The content of this newsletter is somewhat inevitably influenced by the geographical location of its editor, and this is reinforced by the fact that the Cambridge hinterland houses quite a few members of the RDS peerage: the Vice-chairman, Secretaries of the Passenger & Freight Committees and other National committee members. So for those of you who think that the Cambridge main line is being given undue prominence (well, we have come out of the doldrums, after all), you may answer back! The Peterborough area seems particularly bereft, and I would be glad of anyone wishing to become a correspondent there; representation on the east coast is generally better.

Special Events and other advertising material is welcomed. Anyone wishing to sell copies of RE locally should contact me: I found quite a succesul outlet at the Cambridge Library, with an accompanying RDS poster advertising the availability and price of the newsletter. Finally, can I apologize for the occasional 'streaks', this was due to an ailing laser-printer. And thank you everyone who has contributed to this edition.

Dereham Branch Future In the Balance

There was a serious fire at Dereham station in December 1988, followed by the closure of the Elmham-Dereham section in January, and BR will close the entire branch from June 30th this year. There are also rumours that the land between Dereham and Elmham has been sold and possibly Dereham yard as well. However, John Hull, of WyDRAC, has been talking to local district councils and the Norwich Tourist Agency with a view to keeping the line or trackbed intact, and running trains, freight, passenger and other specials, as a private company. UKF are reported to be very unhappy at the closure of the line, which raises questions as to their continued use of BR yards in other parts of East Anglia.

Cambridge Area BR Notes

On Monday 9th January the editor met Stuart Davies and David Rooks (Cambridge Area Manager and Area Passenger Manager respectively) in their offices at Cambridge Station. SD started by saying he was very pleased by the existence of the Society and would be willing to help and supply any information we might need.

The new Anglia Region management structure, which comes into effect on 13th February, will put greater emphasis on line-of-route management. There will be six areas; the NSE North-East London area (Bethnal Green to King's Lynn, including all the Enfield and Chingford branches at the southern end, the Southbury Loop and also the line from Cambridge to Royston, and based at Cambridge), the NSE Great Eastern

area (Liverpool Street to Clacton/Walton/Southend), the INTERCITY area from Norwich to Colchester, the Freight area (covering the whole Anglia Region and also Willesden), and finally the Provincial area which (naturally) gets 'all the rest', and is based at Norwich. At the top of each area is the 'Production Manager', who is in charge not only of day-to-day operations but also of Civil Engineering and S & T Engineering in his area. The public will still be able to refer to this person (who is their Mr. BR) as the 'Area Manager'. This means, for instance, that the Lea Valley area based at Broxbourne will now cease to exist and be managed from Cambridge, and that Ely will be a NSE station, not a Provincial one (although the Provincial Sector may sponsor a project at Ely station if the (NSE) Production manager gives the OK).

On the subject of electrification from Cambridge to King's Lynn, Stuart Davies said he was "confident". The project had been submitted to the Department of Transport and an announcement was expected at any moment; indeed, it had been hoped that the 'special' from Liverpool St. in December would have provided an opportunity for the Minister to make such an announcement, but events at Clapham transpired against that train even running (*Ed. - I've always felt there to be a jinx on the Cambridge line; the previous 'special' was also cancelled shortly before it was due to run*). RDS Members will appreciate that the DoT has recently been heavily involved in Air and Rail safety matters following a spate of transport disasters, and have understandably been devoting a considerable part of their time to them. Had a positive announcement been made in December, the target date for an operational electric railway to King's Lynn would have been May 1991; it is hoped that this date can still be met even with a delayed announcement.

We discussed the introduction of the new Class 321 EMUs, the first brand-new rolling stock since the modernisation-plan trains of the 1950's. From 9th January, three off-peak services were worked by the new stock, and peak-hour services were introduced from January 23rd. The reasoning behind this somewhat odd decision is that the sliding-door stock cannot call at stations with short platforms, hence, until the platforms at Shelford, Whittlesford and Great Chesterford were extended to 8-car length, peak (8-car) trains could not call. (When Liverpool Street gets its platforms extended to 12-car, platform extensions all over the region will begin again...) Local BR management was pleased at being able to offer brand-new rolling stock, but were disappointed at the design of the first class seating in the new units, and more so at the difficulties faced over modifying the existing rolling stock. They hoped that future builds could afford more seats and more space for first class passengers, and floated the idea of some early refurbishment as a means of improving the existing stock.

The recent Cambridgeshire County Council survey which considered three rail transport schemes (a parkway station north of Cambridge, station reopening at Cherry Hinton and Fulbourn, and the reopening of the St. Ives and Wisbech branches): BR thought that the parkway station at Milton was a relatively low-risk scheme, which was the most likely to be successful. This scheme would then act as a catalyst for further rail schemes; something to build public confidence on. The station would need substantial work to provide road access, and the report outlined a new access road from the A45; the whole project would receive public funding, possibly as part of a more general development at Milton. Mr. Davies thought that the costs of establishing a service over any part of the St. Ives line would be high. (The RDS is of course aware of this, but we also see the virtue in establishing the idea of a rail service on the line at an early stage, rather than a later one.)

The current Provincial plans are for arrival of the Class 158 air-conditioned 90mph sprinters in May 1990 on the Anglia to Birmingham/North-West Express routes. The position on rolling stock for local routes was much less clear and depended on the supply of Sprinter trains and the demand for Sprinters from all parts of the country, and the precise implementation of any Provincial cascade schemes. At worst it could mean that the old Metro-Cammell DMUs would be around until 1995; their full life-expectancy. It was agreed that the old DMUs did not provide the desired quality of service; "I wouldn't want to run a service with them".

The future of the two routes from Cambridge to London were discussed, and Mr. Davies said that each route had its strong points. The Liverpool St. route had excellent access to the City, and thus was a prime commuter route, whereas the King's Cross route, with its excellent Underground and BR cross-London services was far more convenient for the off-peak traveller (*Ed. - it is also, in my opinion, more reliable.*), and there had been some, but not substantial, abstraction in peak traffic from the Liverpool Street line to the King's Cross line following electrification to Royston. Services would be marketed so as to exploit the potential of both lines, with an extra 55-minute train to King's Cross during the off-peak (see Timetable Notes). Surprisingly, no big publicity was planned for this fastest-ever timing between town and gown.

Business had been growing rapidly over the last two areas with a 15% increase each year on the Cambridge main line. As there now seemed to be a capacity problem looming at Liverpool St., serious thought was being given as to how to divert Stansted Airport trains (with BAA passenger forecasts requiring more than two trains per hour from the airport) to another London terminus, and one more convenient for the traveller as well. The Central London Rail Study was addressing this and other congestion problems, matching up areas of under- and over-capacity (St. Pancras was an example of the former) and had come up with a number of alternatives. There were no firm proposals apart from the link between the line into King's Cross and St. Pancras/Thameslink which was expected to come into operation in 1995.

The national media had carried a report that a 'subsidy-less NSE' was on cards if demand continued to grow. SD said that it was not possible to say how close (or far) the Cambridge main line was to financial 'break-even', only for Network SouthEast as a whole. With a fully modernised railway, punters might well be "queueing up for shares" (but a fully modernised railway was some way off).

We concluded a very enjoyable meeting by discussing the importance of making the younger generation aware of the national railway system, and what BR was doing to foster interest.

Fen Line Users' Association

Rodney Collins, chairman of FLUA, was expecting an announcement on King's Lynn electrification "before the end of February"; all the indications were for a "yes" to the wires, with the engineers from the Peterborough depot transferring their work to the Fen line. A "yes" decision would inevitably mean bus replacement of some of the off-peak services during installation work, as much of the line between Ely and King's Lynn is single track (Ely - Littleport and Downham Market - Magdalen Road are the only stretches of double track). Class 321 EMUs were planned, with an hourly service to London taking 1hr 45mins (i.e. 25 mins off present timings).

However, although FLUA was definitely in favour of electrification, it had a number of worries. The proposed rolling stock was felt to be unsuitable, and they were asking BR for loco-hauled trains (with the usual MkII stock) for the peak-hour trains, thus continuing the pattern as from May this year. Not only was the '3+2' seating of the 321s criticised, but so were many other areas: no hot buffet, no corridor connections between units making even a trolley service difficult, no tables between seats, and no on-train telephones (with which Racal had been doing some very successful business): business travellers would inevitably lose out. FLUA members maintained that, whilst a reduction in journey time was obviously welcome, this was not of overriding importance: reliability, comfort etc were very important too. Reliability should of course improve with the new equipment, but it looked as though other aspects might suffer.

Mr. Collins was also very concerned about the plight of first-class ticket holders, and particularly existing season-ticket holders. The new 321 stock had only 20 seats as compared with 25 in every 310 unit and 42 in every rake of MkII stock, so where would the existing ticket-holders sit? He claimed that there had been a "conspiracy of silence" from BR about the service offered to first-class passengers, and even suggested that NSE were trying to abolish first class "by stealth", leaving first-class to INTERCITY.

Complaints had also been received about the poor external state of MkII stock, and the provision of information regarding train delays etc (see also note on Ceefax). Finally, FLUA has now extended its boundary to include Cambridge, Whittlesford and Audley End stations. FLUA membership is £2.50 (five newsletters/year): FLUA, c/o Soundplan, FREEPOST, SindalThorpe, Prickwillow, ELY, Cambs.

Branch Meeting at Cambridge YMCA, 26th November 1988.

Steve Wilkinson gave his last address as Branch Chairman. PL reiterated the need to keep up the pressure for a Beccles loop, and the extension of the passing loop at Derby Road. Nationally, an advert in The Guardian newspaper had brought 200 membership enquiries; changes were expected to the 'Section 8' grant system, and the Skegness line had now regained its 16-hour working day. Locally, it was reported that Radio Cambridgeshire had improved their reporting of train delays and cancellations. Several members were unhappy about the press coverage of recent accidents at level crossings.

For the second part of the meeting the guest speaker was Barry Flaxman, Chairman of the TUCC for Eastern England, who has been a member of the committee for the past 17 years. He said that passengers were much better represented today than during the years of Dr. Beeching; and in Eastern England they had the benefit of "the best TUCC in the country". He outlined the committee's roles: 1) dealing with passenger complaints; generally speaking BR had subsequently agreed with TUCC suggestions. 2) Considering proposals for rail closures; "all forms of hardship" were to be assessed. 3) Timetable changes came under their scrutiny, and recently some Peterborough stops had been added to InterCity trains. The TUCCs were independent of Government. He said that the TUCCs were specifically excluded from considering fares; the government, too, distanced themselves from certain matters, as a frequent reply following a referral of a particular matter to the Minister of Transport had been: "This is a matter for the commercial judgement of BR". As chairman of the Rolling stock committee, Mr. Flaxman had persuaded Network SouthEast to change the design of Class 321 first class seats to that of the Class 442 Wessex Electric trains.

The TUCC was in favour of a loop at Beccles on the East Suffolk line. One of the main problems with the line was the large number of open level crossings, which required trains to observe a severe speed restriction. This, coupled with the poor acceleration of the 1955-plan DMUs, gave a very low end-to-end speed. He suggested, in order of importance, the conversion level crossings to Automatic Half-Barriers, and then the introduction of Class 156 Sprinter trains; in effect a second total modernisation.

The King's Lynn electrification scheme, he said, was a typical example of the short-term economies which BR were being forced to adopt in order to get investment projects through Department of Transport criteria. Class 321 EMUs were having to be specified for the rolling stock when something much better was really required: however BR was reluctant to disturb the government by including a different design of EMU. In the circumstances, the TUCC felt that BR had little option and that it was probably the best way forward; there was plenty of demand for the Class 321 on other shorter routes, and there were possibilities for cascade at a later stage. The TUCC had been trying to persuade BR of the need for a 'main-line EMU', running services to Peterborough, King's Lynn and Norwich, and BR had seemed to recognise the need for a new style of EMU; nevertheless the financial hurdle remained.

There seemed no drop in demand for commuter services to London, despite widespread stories off city-based firms laying-off staff following the drop in activity on the Stock Market. With the new Broadgate office development (adjacent to Liverpool Street) shortly to bring an extra 35,000 workers there, he could foresee serious capacity problems at Liverpool Street. NSE's current investment plans would, when completed, merely be catching up with today's demand; so if demand levelled off now and all the current projects were completed, trains would still be carrying a full compliment of passengers.

Class 321 - alias 'Dusty Bin'

Class 321 is a 4-car 25Kv 100mph EMU, and has been introduced on the Liverpool Street to Southend Victoria and Cambridge lines: each unit costs about £1.4m. The design is a development of the Class 317 unit, but there are no end corridor connections. I sampled one recently.

The windows seemed larger (than the 317), and the interior is a blue-gray, the seats dark blue and there are murals at the ends of each coach: generally very pleasant. However, one comes down to earth with a bump, as the seats are noticeably hard. A beeping alarm sounds just before the sliding doors are closed by the driver. Acceleration was impressive, but the train seemed to emit strange (and annoying) groaning sounds when braking and during station stops, and the vibration from the air compressor was keenly felt through the hard seats. Almost all of the seating is face-to-face, with ledges (for drinks etc) provided in each bay, a definite step forward given that there are no tables. There were also a few face-to-back seats, with folding tables; those in the power-car, coupled with windows aligned to the seats, were *nice* seats, I thought. The seat pitch is distinctly variable, and seems to be greater in the powered-car, where there is also some additional luggage space.

Some of the seat design leaves the mind boggling. There are two inward facing seats in one coach, which I tried to sit in. I couldn't, as my shoulders were too wide, as any adult would have found, rendering the those seats unusable and making the remaining seats too close together. I also discovered that the pitch of the first class seating was

actually *less* than the standard class (and therefore less comfortable and less spacious than a 156 Sprinter). This is penny-pinching at its worst - given that the design will have to be changed, it will now cost money to put right, and I think that means 'heads must roll', as it must not be allowed to happen again.

The trains had a rather disastrous debut on Jan. 17th on the Southend Victoria lines - there were at least three failures in peak hours within the first three days when the sliding doors refused to open, some on the 'fast' lines, causing major delays. There were more door problems on the first day of Cambridge line peak working when the 07.29 departed at least 15min late with doors that wouldn't close. Problems have been identified with the sensor on the driver's door and the guard's key switch that enables doors to be opened/closed, but BREL engineers were conspicuous by their absence.

Tarmac Tales

Norfolk County Council and Norwich City Council are pressing ahead with proposals to complete the Norwich Inner Link Road, a distance of about one or two miles, depending on which option. The favoured option at the moment is believed to be Route 'D3' which will cost £23m. Already Norfolk CC experts predict this will only solve traffic problems until the year 2006, less than 20 years hence. Construction of this route will involve demolition of a school and destruction of an historic part of Norwich City. The RDS stand is for a "No Road" option. Up to £38m is available to complete the Inner Ring Road. With this sum of money available we believe that it would be better spent on improving local rail services and on the construction of a City-wide Light Rail system. The fifteen organisations (which includes RDS) involved in "No Road" campaign are in the process of forming a single action group to fight these road proposals. Further details on the "No to the Road" Action Group can be obtained from Mr. Beverley Labbett, 13 Cecil Road, Norwich. Tel. 0603 663572.

P.L.

Freight Notes

Private siding development continues apace in East Anglia. The most recent siding to open is the down-line at Whittlesey, which serves a steel stockholder and a grain merchant.

The sidings at Wymondham have been remodelled to serve as a depot for a building block company. The cement company that previously used the site has moved out. It is good to see the continued development of private sidings along the Breckland line, on which the major traffic sources are now at Brandon, Eccles Road and Wymondham.

Changes are under way at Wisbech. there are two major traffic sources, one of them two way. Spillers now own the former BR Wisbech East Goods Yard which has been considerably cleared up, new security fencing installed and removal of trackwork should now be completed. We await further developments there with interest.

At Cambridge, Redland have put a siding in part of the Chesterton Junction engineers' site and serve it with the Standard Wagon Co. "Self Discharge Train". At King's Lynn a major grain company has expanded their sidings on the former M & GN Harbour branch to accommodate additional traffic.

For the future, the RDS is pushing hard, through the Channel Tunnel Act Section 40

East Anglian Regional Forum, for at least three intermodal depots in the region. These would be for the transfer of containers and swap-bodies from rail to road for local distribution. Chunnel traffic will be the spur to their development but hopefully we would see internal UK traffic using them too. We have called for the depots to be in the Peterboro/Cambridge/Fenland area, North Norfolk/Norwich area and the Ipswich/Colchester Area.

P.W.

Give a Day for Norfolk

Two Suffolk lads, Trevor Garrod and Don Mathew, plus Ken Burton, gave a day for Norfolk on September 10th 1988 when they represented RDS at the conference of this name in Wymondham College. Bodies represented included conservation and amenity groups, parish councils, the National Farmers' Union and similar bodies concerned with preserving the best of Norfolk's environment while coping with the pressures of growth.

Much useful discussion took place; though from the transport point of view it was a pity that no one turned up to represent a newly-formed organisation called "East Anglia Roads for Prosperity". Its advertised spokesman, a T&GWU full-time official, called off at short notice and his promised replacement, a lady from the AA, was apparently unable to find her way to Wymondham. The conference agreed to set up a Norfolk Forum to meet quarterly and RDS has become part of this, represented at its first meeting by Ken Burton.

Arlesey Rejoins the Network

Four years ago, RDS published "Rail Strategy for East Anglia" in which (from earlier research by Mike Hadley) we advocated a reopened station for Arlesey, on the East Coast Main Line between Hitchin and Biggleswade. We made contact with the County Councillor for the area, John Tizard, who joined RDS, organised a public meeting which filled the village hall, and led the campaign which culminated in the opening of a grand-new station on October 1st 1988.

On a bright sunny autumn day, a steady stream of local people came to use the smart new brick station with its hourly electric trains to London and Peterborough. Bedfordshire County Council, Arlesey Town Council and North Hertfordshire District Council, who all gave money towards the scheme, were represented at the opening ceremony; Mid-Bedfordshire District Council, who had opposed the scheme, were not.

RDS members Trevor Garrod and Nick Lewis manned a stall at the station entrance, selling books and giving away leaflets. "East Anglia by Rail" sold especially well, demonstrating to Arlesey folk that they not only now have a fast commuter link to the capital, but are also plugged into the East Anglian network.

Sponsored Cycle Ride

Trevor Garrod and Richard Pill plan to travel from Cambridge to Oxford by a combination of bicycle and train on a summer Saturday, probably in June, raising funds for the RDS. It is hoped to take in Histon, St. Ives, Bedford, among other places. Any other East Anglian Branch member interested in participating (perhaps for part of the way) should contact T.G. by early March.

East Anglia by Rail III. Thank you to those members who have contributed to the third edition. There is still time for any black-and-white photos to be submitted to Trevor Garrod. The text goes to Jarrolds at the end of February and the books should appear in June

Sprinting Across England. Thank you to members who returned completed questionnaires in the autumn on the new sprinter services to the Midlands and the North. These have now been analysed and show a majority in favour of the new trains - but with a considerable number of constructive criticisms. A report based on our survey, and provisionally entitled **Sprinting Across England** will be published in February. It can be obtained for £1.00 (incl. postage) from Roger Skilton, 63 Abbots Road, Leicester, LE5 1DD (Cheques payable to RDS East Midlands Branch).

T.G.

New Members:-

P. J. Summner	36 Redfern Close, CAMBRIDGE CB4 2DU.
J. E. Davison	5 Brooklyn Road, Dovercourt, HARWICH, Essex, CO12 3QE.
David S. Soames	158 Atherstone Avenue, PETEBOROUGH, Cambs, PE3 6UN.
Brian Wilmot	127 Rosehill Road, IPSWICH, Suffolk, IP3 8ET.
Mr & Mrs R. S. Rathbone	50 Elmgrove Lane, NORWICH, NR3 2LF.
Keith P. Nicholson, Maurice Nicholson	Garth Hav 30 Queen's Drive West, PETERBOROUGH, PE1 2UU
Simon Bull	12, Parson's Drive, Ellington, HUNTINGDON, Cambs, PE18 0PM
Alan J. Smith	15 Fairway, CHATTERIS, Cambs, PE16 6SX.
Cambridge & District Co-op Society Ltd.	PO Box 53, Group Admin Offices, Coldhams Lane, CAMBRIDGE, CB1 3ER.

King's Cross Station has gained another platform, number 11, in late 1988. This will increase peak-hour capacity and reduce the necessity of having to have two off-peak trains on the same platform, which must have caught many people unawares. BR announced that the station had been chosen as the site for the second Channel Tunnel passenger terminal and for through services.

Dr. Martin Mogridge's lecture **Jam Yesterday, Jam Today, Jam Tomorrow** (Histon please note) on traffic congestion is available from Transport 2000 Ltd., Walkden House, 10 Melton St., LONDON NW1 2EJ. Price £1.

Oracle page 166, titled "British Rail News" now carries the following message: "Oracle regrets that we are no longer providing information about British Rail services. We have done this because we find British Rail unable, reliably, to inform us or you (their customers) about services delayed, diverted or cancelled." Come on, BR.

Car commuters in Cambridge received a shock in early January with the news that the all-day charge for a parking-space in one of the city-centre multi-storey car parks will be going up from £1 to £10. It's all part of the scheme to introduce a Park and Ride which, due to rocketing land prices, will cost £15m instead of the original estimate of £5m.

The new Class 158 90mph Air-conditioned Sprinters are to have a false floor to help reduce vibration and noise from the underfloor diesel engines. They should be introduced in May 1990 timetable (although you may see a prototype unit from this May, and further deliveries from January 1990).

The North and South junctions for the **Stansted Airport** link have been constructed, as has the bridge supporting the M11 motorway. Track extends for about 100m. The proposal to divert London-Cambridge services via the airport seems to have been abandoned, with services from the north being provide as a Peterborough-Cambridge-Airport service, using diesel trains: an open platform is being provided at the airport station, which is capable of being extended eastwards, if desired.

Witham may have a new branch line to Maldon before the end of the century. A new track would have to be built as the old track has been turned into a nature trail, and was "too narrow" anyway. Heavy rail with through services to London is proposed at £6m, a light rail alternative costing only £1m less; the scheme has the backing of local MPs. More ambitiously, a route from Stansted Airport - Braintree could be reopened, but this would be well into the next century.

Major Engineering Work is scheduled at Liverpool St. over Easter, when the entire station will be closed. You have been warned!

The line between **Tottenham Hale** and **Stratford** is to be electrified, to provide a diversionary route for **Lea Valley** trains. This route will be of prime importance during the rebuilding of **Liverpool Street** and resignalling of its approaches, allowing trains to call at **Stratford**. The line used to see a T.H. - North Woolwich DMU service, but since May 1985 it has been freight-only.

Fighting for Rail, published by RDS price £2.15 (inc. p&p) is available from Alan Harwood, 139 Harrowdene Gardens, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0DN. This is an excellent book showing the professional side of the RDS. It has much local content and is ideal for introducing your friends to the RDS.

Colchester St. Botolph's now has a half-hourly service to Colchester North, and there is a possibility of direct trains to London. The station is undergoing a facelift after losing its canopy in the hurricane.

Paul Channon has said that he would like to see a **privatisation** plan based on the best parts of all the proposed schemes(!). The DTp is reported to be worried about a return to regional rail companies because of the problems of linking services nationwide.

The joint BR/LRT/DTp **Central London Rail Study** has identified three schemes for increasing rail capacity in London: a new East-West (Liverpool St. to Paddington/Marylebone) BR line, a new North-South (King's Cross/Euston to Victoria) BR line, and a new Underground line from Chelsea to Hackney, with an estimated total cost of £2000m. Funding would come from private developers, increased fares and possibly the public purse if benefits such as reduction in road congestion could be shown. The Transport Secretary said that a decision whether to proceed with any or all of the schemes would be made later this year, and that the chances of a "yes" were "very good indeed".

DIARY

Thursday 23rd February. St. Ives/Huntingdon Re-opening Campaign. Venue to be decided, please contact Richard Pill, 4 Rowlandson Way, Manton Heights, Bedford MK41 7LT.

Saturday 25th February. RDS East Anglian Branch AGM at the Conference Room, Central Library, Bury St. Edmunds at 2pm. After the business part of the meeting Russell Whipps will show videos on the the East Suffolk line "Manual/Radio-control Signalling, 1984-1988". The following nominations for Officers and Committee must be sent to the Branch Secretary by Saturday 18th February:- Chairman, Sales Officer, Vice Chairman, Minutes Secretary, Secretary, Membership Secretary, Treasurer plus four other Committee members.

Tuesday, 11th April. Institute of Transport Administration (Norwich Branch) AGM. The IOTA have invited RDS members to attend this meeting at the Lansdowne Hotel, 116 Thorpe Road, Norwich, commencing at 7.30pm. A short business meeting will start the evening followed by a presentation from BR on "Electrification". As this is not a public meeting will any RDS members wishing to attend please contact the RDS Branch Secretary before April 4th, 1988.

Saturday 29th April. RDS National AGM at 2pm, Polygon Hotel, Southampton.

NENTA Railtours. Special Trains (Saturdays); April 8th to York, Durham, Newcastle and Beamish Museum; May 6th to Winchester (Mid-Hants Railway), Southampton, Bournemouth and Weymouth; May 13th to York and Haworth; July 8th (First Class only) to Llangollen (International Musical Eisteddfod) and Chester. Phone North Walsham (0692) 406152.

The Anglia 1989/90 TimeTable

An exercise in 'fine-tuning' rather than radical change exemplifies the next timetable, due to start on May 15th. Given that the Class 158 'Luxury' Sprinters are due to be phased in during early 1990, Cambridge-King's Lynn electrification hopefully underway and Liverpool St.-Shenfield re-signalling completed, one can understand why the May 1990 timetable is the one nominated for an extensive recast. But to this year's prospects.

The Provincial service is to stay broadly unchanged, but on the Cambridge-Norwich route seven new through services will operate, several of which are to run to/from Gt. Yarmouth. Ipswich-Cambridge services are to be integrated with those onward to Peterborough which is good news for customers from Dullingham and Newmarket. INTERCITY, bolstered no doubt by the belief that Liverpool St. will be "transformed" after re-signalling, is pruning five to seven minutes from its Norwich services although departure times will remain essentially unchanged.

The finely balanced web that is Network SouthEast's contribution to East Essex rail travel will witness no profound changes apart from the rapidly increasing presence of Class 321 EMUs on the services to Southend and Cambridge. An outcome of this will be the demise of Class 86 loco hauled stock on the route to King's Lynn; the through service will be cut back to peak period only and be diesel hauled throughout. At other times the connecting service from Cambridge will be formed by an ubiquitous Metro-Cammell Class 101 DMU, but this will at least be hourly. After which, Paul Channon permitting, ANY electric traction will seem positively indulgent.

From May, the fastest trains from Cambridge to London will be running every hour to King's Cross in 55 mins with one stop at Stevenage, giving four trains an hour off-peak. However, Liverpool St. times will stretch to a fastest of 72 mins as extra stops and engineering allowances are added. A surprising advertisement for the latest High-Tech, 100mph Class 321s, don't you think?

Chris Burton.