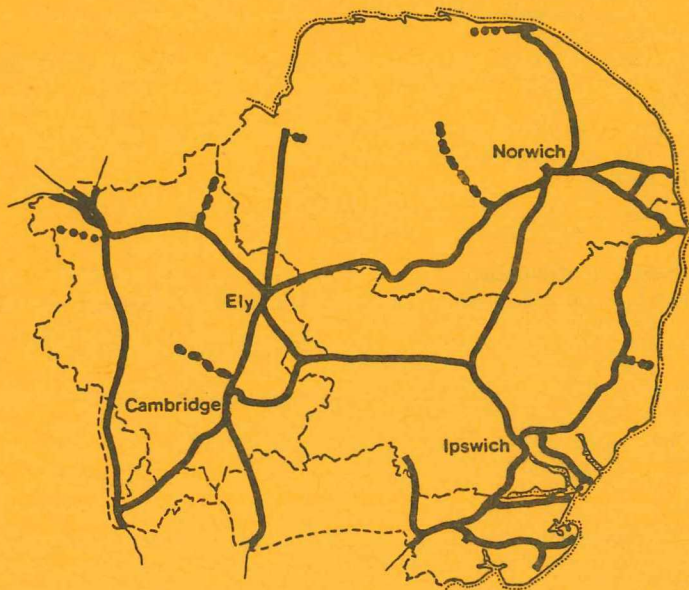


Rail East

Number 69
November 1989

Newsletter of the East Anglian Branch



35p

Free to members

MP in Bid to Reopen St. Ives Line
Bedford to Sandy Threat
Focus on Rail User Groups

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY

East Anglian Branch

President: Steve Wilkinson, A. Inst. T. A.

CHAIRMAN:

Peter Wakefield, 43 High Street, Oakington, Cambridge, CB4 5AG.
(Tel. Cambridge (0223) 233230)

VICE-CHAIRMAN:

Charles Taylor, 15 Gainsborough Road, Felixstowe, Suffolk, IP11 7HT.
(Tel. 270612)

SECRETARY:

Peter Lawrence, 75 Marl Pit Lane, Norwich, NR5 8XN.
(Tel. Norwich (0603) 743446)

TREASURER:

Lewis Buckingham, 25 Drury Road, Colchester, Essex, CO2 7UY.
(Tel. Colchester (0206) 571734)

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:

Clara Zilahi, 31 Wimbotsham Road, Downham Market, Norfolk, PE38 9PE.
(Tel. 383954)

SALES OFFICER:

Chris Milnes, 25 Thetford Way, Sth Wootton, Kings Lynn, PE30 3TG.
(Tel. King's Lynn (0553) 671637)

MINUTES SECRETARY:

John Page, 2 Milton Court, Coles Rd, Milton, Cambridge, CB4 4BP.
(Tel. Cambridge (0223) 862026)

OTHER COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Stephen Lawrence, 8 Supanee Court, French's Road, Cambridge, CB4 3LB.
(Tel. Cambridge (0223) 63278)

Shirley Dex, 71 Queens Way, Trumpington Road, Cambridge, CB2 2AY.
(Tel. Cambridge (0223) 359875)

Ken Burton, Old Vicarage Farmhouse, Vicarage Road, Foulden, Thetford.
Norfolk IP26 5AB (Tel. 036 621 427)

John Thompson, 136 Dell Road, Lowestoft, NR33 9NT.
(Tel. Lowestoft (0502) 581481)

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).

RDS Members: the coding on the envelope containing this issue of *Rail East* (and all RDS correspondence) tells you when your RDS subscription is due. For instance, "89.07" means that you were due to renew on 1st July 1989.

National Membership Secretary: Frank Hastilow, 49 Irnham Road, Four Oaks, Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands, B74 2TQ. Annual Subscription £7.50.

National Sales Officer: Alan Harwood, 139 Harrowdene Gdns, Teddington, Middx, TW11 0DN.

Contributions and articles for the next issue of *Rail East* should be submitted by January 15th 1990, for publication in February. Material may be sent on floppy disc in BBC or IBM format. Information for the Diary column is welcome.

RAIL EAST

Number 69
November 1989

Newsletter of the RDS East Anglian Branch

Editor: Stephen Lawrence

Channel Tunnel Rail Link

The scheme to build the Channel Tunnel Rail Link to London rumbles on. With more of BR's original route via Swanley being sent underground, construction costs have rocketed from £1.3bn to an estimated £3bn. Schemes have been advanced for carrying Kent commuters to King's Cross along the high-speed line, in an attempt to boost revenue, but balancing the books seems to be becoming increasingly difficult. So perhaps it is time to take a completely new look at the project.

A consortium formed by Mowlem, Hanover and Bechtel has proposed a £1.7bn scheme based on what was known as TALIS (Thames Alternative Link International System), which was originally put forward, largely by the people of Kent, as a less obtrusive high-speed link. The route runs through the more sparsely populated areas of North Kent; Sittingbourne, Isle of Sheppey, crossing the Thames near Tilbury and ending up at Stratford. Stratford was dropped as a terminus for the reasons of access to Central London and for the lack of suitable rail links to the north. But that decision was made before the Central London Rail Study had made such enthusiastic noises about the East-West Crossrail, which is the proposed new main-line rail tunnel running from Stratford to Paddington.

If the international rail link did terminate at Stratford, the effect of decanting about 700 people straight on to the Central Line (which must be *the* most overcrowded railway line in Britain) would clearly be unacceptable. But with a new transit system ready to whisk passengers into Central London it becomes more of a possibility. Whether or not the high-speed International/Commuter trains were to run down the new tunnel from Stratford, there would be an obvious case for the owners of the high-speed line to contribute substantially to the East-West Crossrail project itself, and therefore to the latter project's viability.

For East Anglians, Stratford is becoming increasingly convenient. Connections to the main lines out of Kings Cross, St. Pancras and Euston *could* also be via the crossrail tunnel, by a connection to the Thameslink tracks near Farringdon. The alternatives would involve the use of the ultra-slow North London Line (clogged by the passage of a stopping train every 20mins) or by some other new line north of it. The importance of quick access to the main lines is highlighted by those travelling from, say Coventry or Birmingham, for which the former route (i.e. the North London Line) would not be encouraging.

But let us not lose sight of the original proposal. The Swanley route leading via new tunnel to a King's Cross International Station wins hands down in terms of service offered to customer and country: fast, unimpeded access to to a central point in London with virtually unrivalled Underground connections, additional commuter-train capacity, ability to serve the Waterloo terminus (connections to South-West England) and all four main lines to the north and the west of London.

In building the new infrastructure the important objective is to provide access to *central* London for passenger trains from the continent - and that is obviously expensive. TALIS as it stands, whilst passing through less sensitive parts of Kent, simply avoids this issue (and therefore the cost). If a TALIS-like route were to triumph, it should do so because it will disturb less the Garden of England, *but* it must have access to and beyond central London. Modifications to provide the latter may well push the cost up to a similar level to the Swanley scheme.

One thing is for certain, decisions will have to be made swiftly. Redevelopment is already planned for Stratford, but more importantly, the TALIS line would not be able to serve the planned International Station at Waterloo, which Chunnel trains will serve before the dedicated line is built. Now *that* would be an embarrassing white elephant.

Committee News

The Branch Committee would like to give a warm welcome to Chris Milnes for volunteering to be our new Sales Officer. If you know of any events at which RDS material could be sold, please get in touch with him. On a sadder note, Peter Lawrence will be standing down shortly as Branch Secretary, and from the committee for a year. I am sure that everyone associated with the branch would like to thank them very much for all the hard work he has put in over the years, and his post will be a hard one to fill. Notwithstanding the loss of an administrator, Peter was also well placed to follow the Norwich transport scene, and so a committee representative from that 'fine city' would be welcome, as would a person from the Peterborough area.

BR Open Day at Cambridge Station

September 30th marked the launch of the *West Anglia* brand name, and as far as RDS was concerned it was especially successful as there were passenger trains running on the St. Ives branch. A Southern-Region Diesel Locomotive hauled a nine-coach train to the end of the line (at Fen Drayton Quarry) and back three times, followed by an Intercity Charter Train. All trains were full and an estimated 1500 people traversed the line, Trevor Garrod handing out RDS books and "Welcome Back" leaflets and a running commentary being provided by the Editor over the train's public address system. Combined takings from the RDS Stand and on-train sales was over £250, and many thanks to those who helped distribute 6000 leaflets advertising the gala day.

MP in Bid to Reopen St. Ives Line

South-East Cambridgeshire MP Jim Paice launched a new bid to reopen the line to St.

Ives and for extension to Huntingdon. Roads in the area, he believes, could be considerably relieved by its reopening, and he is pressing local businesses to fund a feasibility study which would cost between £10,000 and £30,000. The study should consider be separate from the County Council plan for Light Railways for the city (see below). He also sees a role for further private funding for the development of the line itself. RDS is of course delighted that this MP, and also Mr. John Major, have given their support to the scheme.

Cambridge & Norwich Transport proposals

Cambridgeshire CC have produced a plan for transport in Cambridge which includes a proposal for Light Rail. Modern 'trams' would run along existing BR alignments to St. Ives, Newmarket and along a short distance of the old Oxford-Cambridge line, with large Park-and-Ride car parks at the end of each line. Quite how these trams will share, or take over, or even have new tracks built alongside existing BR tracks has not been proposed. Department of Transport regulations do not permit trams to share tracks with BR trains because of the reduced strength of the trams in the event of a collision. The RDS view is that having trams is unnecessary since no on-street running is proposed - indeed one of the new routes suggested is a new line, mostly in cut-and-cover tunnel, following the line of the river to a new city-centre terminal. We in RDS suggest that BR trains should run down this line and that the whole system should be run by standard BR commuter-trains, increasing flexibility.

Save Your Trackbed!

The Bedford-Sandy trackbed is being threatened by the A428 Bedford Southern Bypass, which would present a most severe obstacle to the establishment of an east-west line between Cambridge, Bedford and Oxford. Readers are therefore asked to write to Mr. M.R.Smith, A Principle, Eastern Region, Dept of Transport, 49-53 Goldington Road, Bedford, MK40 3LL, quoting the reference 504265/A4528/40/2 and ask for a means to be provided for reinstating a rail link from the Sandy area, by providing an underpass bridge for a railway line at the point where the road crosses the old Bedford-Sandy trackbed. Strong interest in this issue also comes from Milton Keynes BC and Oxford CC who have insisted that the Bedford-Sandy route be included in their Oxford-Milton Keynes rail link feasibility study.

Norfolk and Suffolk Rail Alliance Meeting

This was held on 21st June at Gt. Yarmouth Town Hall. Electrification of the Norwich - Gt. Yarmouth/Lowestoft lines was discussed. At a meeting the previous day between alliance representatives and BR management, the difficulties that electrification would present were discussed, and an undertaking was given by BR to obtain the views of InterCity on operating through services. The cost of the work would necessitate substantial third-party involvement. A report was to go before Gt. Yarmouth Council Economic Development Committee on the subject as soon as confirmation of details had been received from BR.

Complaints had been received from residents in the Haddiscoe area regarding the removal of stops at this station. At the meeting the previous day, BR explained their rationale of commercial appraisal and that said that gains would be made by tailoring the service to the actual demands of intermediate stations, allowing the service between the main centres to be speeded up. It was agreed that discussion would be held on specific services to establish any special needs. The Chairman expressed the view that he hoped, in future, that BR would respect their statement made the previous day, and look more closely at local needs.

John Thompson

New Members:-

David Randall
D Anger-Turner

90 Blackmead, Orton Malbourne, Peterborough
The Railway Station, Wymondham, Norfolk

Congratulations to our long-standing member Mr. W.R.Fuller of Pepys Terrace, Impington and his wife on their recent Diamond Wedding Anniversary. A signal success to you both, keep on the right lines in the future!

Freight Notes

In 1981/2 the East Anglian Branch together with the Freight Committee supported an application under Section 8 of the Railways Act of 1974 for rail sidings at Papworths Freight Terminal at Queen Adelaide near Ely. This was subsequently granted and Sir Peter Parker performed the official opening. Travellers on the line north of Ely will have seen over the years a busy rail terminal with a variety of wagons being loaded and unloaded. In 1985 the Freight Committee were invited to see the progress and were more than pleased particularly with the enthusiasm of the Terminal Manager, Rex Lane.

I have recently been in correspondence with the Potter Group at Melmerby in North Yorkshire who own the Ely site and am pleased to report of further expansion which will enable the company to compete in the 1990's with confidence. Plans are under way for spending £1.5m over the next two years installing up-to-date equipment for the handling and storage of bulk goods. This will further boost efficiency enabling the railhead to increase its loading and unloading capacity from 200 to 1000 tonnes per hour. Specialised storage for sensitive products will be included aimed at speeding up transfer of goods from road to rail. The Potter Group genuinely believe that Railfreight is the ideal long-distance transport of the future and coupled with the obvious environmental benefits to be achieved particularly bearing in mind the relaxing of trade barriers in 1992 and the coming of the Channel Tunnel. The plans also include incursion into inland waterway traffic. The RDS certainly wish the company well in these exciting ventures.

Also in 1985 we supported an application for a Section 8 Grant made by Richard Johnston Ltd at Snetterton. There was some local opposition - two neighbouring Parish Councils being completely of opposite views, for instance. However the then

minister, David Mitchell, gave his blessing and a private siding off the main Ely to Norwich line near Eccles Road station was built. The siding is now a mile long and has holding facilities for 24 Polybulk wagons each with a carrying capacity of 58 tonnes. Other facilities include a loading bay, two sidings, and has certainly saved about 7500 lorry movements in the area. In recent weeks Tarmac Roadstone have made a planning application for permission to import aggregates by rail and install a coated roadstone and concrete batching plant. We have written to both companies and Breckland District Council supporting the application. At the time of going to press we have no news to report but would trust that the elected representatives will give their full support to the proposals.

Steve Wilkinson

Bure Valley Railway

1.5 miles of track are reported to have been laid on the narrow-gauge Bure Valley Railway between Hoveton and Aylsham. The Company hopes to have a service running next summer.

We have been informed that there will be through ticketing facilities with BR and that consideration will also be given to a halt at Buxton (earlier opposed by certain vociferous local residents). RDS has written to the Company and to Broadland District Council, welcoming these moves and offering to help publicise the railway when it starts operating.

Late Evening Trains

BR threatened to cut late evening services on most Provincial lines in East Anglia from October 2nd. However, thanks to financial support from various local authorities, nearly all have been reprieved, at least for the time being.

Suffolk and Norfolk CCs, Waveney DC, Ipswich BC, Gt. Yarmouth BC and Norwich City Council are among the authorities which clubbed together in order to pay train crew costs and ensure continuation of these trains to Sheringham, Yarmouth, Lowestoft and Felixstowe, and on the East Suffolk Line.

Suffolk Coastal District Council initially refused to give a relatively modest £3000 but, following lobbying, agreed to reconsider and at the time of writing are seeking further talks with BR.

The Councils are to be commended for stepping in with financial help. However, the situation must be monitored carefully. It could set a dangerous precedent of local authorities being asked to subsidise progressively more and more of BR's operations and Central Government cutting back more and more on the Public Service Obligation grant.

We also need to promote the late trains more. RDS and users' groups are considering

leaflets to publicise them. Any member willing to help distribute these should contact the Branch Secretary or relevant users' group secretary. [*The reprieve came too late for the trains to be included in the main BR Passenger Timetable, nor are they included in the supplement - Ed.*]

The Wisdom of the Road Lobby

Wimbledon Football Club travelled to Norwich by train when they played the 'Canaries'. This is because East Anglian roads are so bad. That, at least, is the conclusion of the road lobby organisation, "East Anglia Roads for Prosperity", in its recent publication. Perhaps the thought has not occurred to them that Wimbledon FC may actually *prefer* travelling by train. Certainly, one RDS member saw them on a train coming back from a match in Newcastle last winter...

In fact, the propaganda of EARP (which charges a subscription of £35 a year - nearly five times that of RDS) is as significant for what it does *not* say as for what it does. Issues like loss of productive land, pollution, the greenhouse effect, those without use of a car, etc. are virtually ignored.

While on the subject of pro-road campaigning, it is worth noting a couple of other points. The Eastern Daily Press invited readers to phone in to say whether they supported massive additional spending on Norfolk's roads, as proposed in the June White Paper. A mere 12% of respondents gave it their backing.

The East Anglian Daily Times ran a campaign for dualling the A140, with coupons for people to sign in support of this idea printed in issue after issue for about a month. They received just 1600 signatures - about one third of what we in RDS obtained in 1980 with our petition to electrify the parallel railway line, which received much less media publicity.

So it is questionable whether the bodies who want millions spent on extravagant road schemes speak for the majority of East Anglians.

Continental Tickets

It is no longer possible to buy a boat ticket to Europe, or a Continental rail ticket at Ipswich station - though Norwich, Cambridge and Harwich Parkeston Quay still have this facility. Nor is the international booking office at London Victoria as helpful as it used to be. At one time it would work out a fare and provide tickets for an Continental rail journey; now its range is more restricted.

I found Thomas Cook in Tavern Street, Ipswich, more helpful though. They were able to provide a Felixstowe - Zeebrugge ferry ticket within 48 hours and a fairly simple Continental rail ticket within a fortnight.

BR have been reducing the number of stations offering Continental tickets, in order to

save administrative costs. RDS has been in correspondence with them and with the Central Transport Consultative Committee about this. Of course it is unreasonable to expect to walk to, say, Thetford station and immediately buy a through ticket to, say, a obscure destination in Portugal or Sicily. But nowadays, a major *INTERCITY* station like Ipswich ought, given a few days notice, to be able to provide a ticket to a town of comparable size in Europe. It would also be reasonable for BR to charge a commission for such a service - Thomas Cook charged me £5, for example.

Mike Breslin, of the RDS Passenger Committee, has been pursuing this matter. He would be pleased to hear from any member with either good or bad experiences of trying to buy a ticket to the Continent over the last year or two. Write to him at 35 Rudston Rd, Childwall, Liverpool, L16 4PC.

Proposed Bike-and-Train Leaflet

I am considering the production of a leaflet in the spring of 1990, giving up to ten easy cycle rides from stations on the East Suffolk Line. The rides would be of a maximum of 20 miles, with places of interest, pubs and cafes at suitable points along them. Possibilities include Darsham - Dunwich and Wickham Market - Framlingham.

A rail users' group in Dyfed, Wales, has produced a leaflet of this type, which has gone down well and is to be re-issued next year. Would any member willing to help in any way, or with suggestions and constructive comments, please contact TG.

East Anglia by Rail III

The third edition of our guidebook to the region was due out at the end of September. The delay in publication was not the fault of RDS. Gracing the cover of the book is a picture of one of the new Sprinter trains on the Breckland Line, while there is a photo of Norwich Castle on the back. All the articles have been updated to make this the best guidebook on the market for all the railways of our region and the places of interest alongside them. Why not give a copy to someone for Christmas? It contains 64 pages, is fully illustrated and costs just £2.50. The East Anglian Branch receives 25p in royalties for every copy sold, or more if you buy from our Sales Officer.

Trevor Garrod

Compendium of Rail User Groups

West Anglia Line

FLUA - Fen Line Users' Association

All stations between Cambridge & King's Lynn, Whittlesford & Audley End.
Chairman: Rodney Collins, 31 Church Road, Wimbotsham, King's Lynn.
Secretary: Stuart Todd, 19 Hall Road, King's Lynn PE30 3DD.

SENTA - Stansted, Elsenham & Newport Travellers' Association
(Also includes Audley End)
Chairman: Nigel Holland, 34 St John's Rd, Stansted, Essex.

Bishop's Stortford Season Ticket Holders' Association
Sec: Adrian Wright, Clare Court, Rye Street, Herts, CM23 2HD.

Anglia Provincial

NENTA - North East Norfolk Travellers Association:
(Norwich - Sheringham Line)
Ray Davis, 10 Buxton Road, N. Walsham, Norfolk NR28 0ED.

ENTA - East Norfolk Travellers' Association:
(Norwich - Yarmouth/Lowestoft Lines)
Sec: Peter Warner, 57 Clarkson Rd, Lingwood, Norfolk NR13 4AB

ESTA - East Suffolk Travellers' Association:
(Ipswich - Lowestoft Line and local Bus services)
Sec: John Brodribb, 12 Kemp's Lane, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 9XA

ESTA (Felixstowe)
Sec: C. Taylor, 15 Gainsborough Road, Felixstowe IP11 7HT.

WyDRAC - Wymondham and Dereham Rail Action Committee
Chairman: John Hull, Cydonia Cottage, Station Road, Yaxham, Dereham, Norfolk.

Great Eastern

Stowmarket Rail Users' Association
Sec: Mr. R.S. Rehan, 38 West View, Stowmarket IP14 1SD

Manningtree Rail Users' Association
Contact: Rupert Metcalf, 5 Nash Close, Manningtree, Essex CO11 2LE

Colchester Rail Users' Association:
Correspondence to: G. Male, 24A Cowdray Avenue, Colchester, CO1 1UT

Sudbury and Marks Tey Rail Users' Association
Mike Davies, 45 Elm Road, Sudbury, Suffolk.

Witham and Braintree Rail Users' Association

Chairman: David Bigg, Eye-level, 76 Maldon Rd, Witham, Essex

Great Northern

The London Intercity Association

Mrs. Linda Smith, 40 Ledbury Road, Netherton, Peterborough PE3 6RH.

Peterborough Rail Users' Group

The Secretary, PRUG, PO Box 116, Peterborough, PE3 6RS

Huntingdon Rail Users' Group

Sec: Dr. N.E.Cross, 3i India Group plc, 71 Waterloo Road, London SE1 8XP

St. Neots Rail Users' Group

Sec: Mrs. J. McKay, 26 Wilkinson Close, Eaton Socon PE19 3HJ

Surprisingly, Norwich & Ipswich have no User Groups, but there is some activity at Diss. BLUA, the Breckland Line Users Association, is currently being re-grouped. And has anyone heard anything of the Anglia Rail Association?

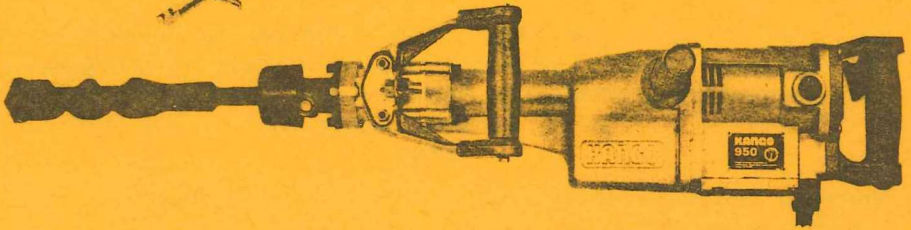
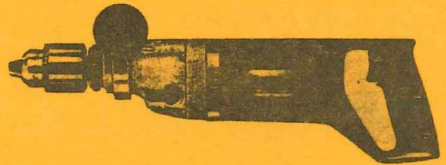
Diary

November 25th RDS Branch Meeting at Emmanuel Church Hall, Trumpington St, Cambridge at 2pm. Several speakers from Anglia rail user groups will be talking about their local issues.

February 24th 1990 RDS Annual General Meeting at the Central Library, Bury St. Edmunds at 2pm.

March 25th - 31st 1990 RDS Rail Development Week. We need sites for RDS displays (small) - ask your local Building Society if they have any space. Larger displays will be mounted at Libraries etc. A special train on the St. Ives branch is hoped for.

TOOL HIRE FROM THURSTON



KANGO HAMMERS
ANGLE GRINDERS
CIRCULAR SAWS
JIG SAWS
DRILLS
PERCUSSION DRILLS
BELT SANDERS
VACUUM CLEANERS
CARPET CLEANERS
WALLPAPER STRIPPERS
PRESSURE WASHERS

TRANSFORMERS
ORBITAL SANDERS
FLOOR SANDERS
ELECTRIC PLANERS
POST-HOLE BORERS
ROTAVATORS
CHAIN SAWS
GRASS CUTTERS
REAPER MOWERS
STRIMMERS
HEDGE TRIMMERS



Thurston Building Services Ltd

GREAT BARTON, BURY ST EDMUNDS, SUFFOLK IP31 2PJ. TEL: 0284 87 611