

Rail East

Number 75
February 1992

25p Free to members

Newsletter of the East Anglian Branch of the Railway Development Society.

NEW ROUTES IN ESSEX PROPOSED

The Witham and Braintree Rail Users Association have issued a report suggesting new services and rail links for the area. The report calls for a new line to be opened between Stansted Airport and Braintree. The line which would cost around £35 m, would give a direct link to the airport from Essex and provide a through link from Colchester to Cambridge. Also included in the report are proposals for a direct service from Colchester to Coventry via the North London Line and a £14 m scheme to re-open the line from Witham to Maldon.

For further details of the proposals, please contact Mr David Bigg, Chairman Witham and Braintree Rail Users Association, Eye Level, 76 Maldon Road, Witham, Essex CM8 1HP.

RDS MEETING CAMBRIDGE, 16TH NOVEMBER

For our 1991 public meetings, the branch invited managers from the three BR passenger sectors. To complete the trio, the guest speaker at our Cambridge meeting was Julian Crow, Planning and Marketing Manager for Network SouthEast's West Anglia and Great Northern routes. He started by saying that it was a challenge to maintain progress in improving services during a recession, and at a time of much media hostility towards BR. The 1992 summer timetable would see the new electric service to King's Lynn and a revised service on the Cambridge to Liverpool Street line which should prove more reliable. He said that the Stansted Express service had got off to a good start, and surveys had shown it to be one of the positive features of the Airport. Traffic from the Airport is expected to increase rapidly when trans-atlantic flights start from Stansted.

When asked about the St Ives line, Mr Crow replied, that NSE would be happy to operate services on the line, but that the money to re-open the route would have to come from other sources. He accepted that a circular Kings Cross-St Ives-Cambridge-Kings Cross service would have advantages and would not require any additional rolling stock.

20 YEARS ON

Much has been achieved since the East Anglian Branch of the then Railway Invigoration Society was formed at a meeting of less than ten people in Suffolk in February 1972.

The growth of the pro-rail lobby is the first obvious achievement - our Branch has increased its membership tenfold from the original 30 and nearly all the Rail Users Groups that now exist on practically every line in our region were formed on the initiative of our Society. Thus thousands of rail users are now brought together in East Anglia - and if this had been the case in the 1960s, it is possible that more of our network could have been saved.

Wherever an issue affecting rail travel has arisen in East Anglia, RDS has been in there, campaigning - with successes from the re-opening of Magdalen Road Station (now Watlington) in 1975 to the saving of the Reedham - Yarmouth line a decade later; from the building of a new station at Arlesey to the completion of electrification to Harwich, Ipswich, Norwich, Cambridge and Peterborough.

We are pleased to have had a hand in encouraging new freight traffic at places like Ely and Eccles Road and worked successfully for the new links to Felixstowe Docks and Stansted Airport. Having failed in our campaign for a restored passenger service on the BR freight line through Aylsham, we then supported the Bure Valley Railway which brought back passenger trains to the town, albeit narrow-gauge, in 1990.

RDS and its associated action committees ran over 30 special trains over freight only lines from 1978 onwards and published a popular guidebook that is now in its third edition and has led to a series covering all of Great Britain. Indeed, many of the actions and ideas of the East Anglian Branch have been used and developed successfully by our Branches in other parts of the country.

IN BRIEF

General Secretary Trevor Garrod was one of the four panellists on the Radio Norfolk phone-in on railways and local councils on December 9th.

The East Suffolk Travellers' Association will be holding exhibitions in Lowestoft Library (June 1st - 13th) and Beccles Library (June 22nd - 27th). The aim will be partly to promote the new Sprinter service that should by then be running on the East Suffolk Line. If you can help set up, take down, prepare material etc., please let Trevor Garrod know.

ESTA is holding its AGM on Saturday April 25th in Halesworth. For details, please contact Trevor Garrod or watch the ESTA notice-board at stations along the line.

AGM

The 1992 Annual General Meeting of the East Anglian Branch will be held at the Ely Maltings on Saturday 22nd February 1992 starting at 2.15 pm.

AGENDA

1. Chairman's welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest speaker : Mr. C Green, Director InterCity
4. Guest speaker : Mr. G McGregor, Chairman Highways Committee
Suffolk County Council
5. Questions and answers
6. Closing comments by Mr S Wilkinson, RDS National Chairman

Short break for tea or coffee

BRANCH AGM

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes and matters arising from the 1991 AGM
3. Chairman's report
4. Secretary's report
5. Treasurer's report
6. Election of Officers :

i. Chairman	ii. Vice-Chairman
iii. Secretary	iv. Treasurer
v. Sales Officer	vi. Minutes Secretary
vii. Membership Secretary	viii. Press Officer
ix. Committee Members	
7. Appointment of Honorary Auditor
8. Motions
9. Branch President's closing remarks.

Notes. Nominations for Officers and Committee and any Notices of Motion must be in the hands of the Secretary by 15th February duly proposed and seconded.

Members who are attending the 20th Anniversary Buffet, will receive a ticket and details with this Rail East. If there is anyone who has paid for a buffet but does not receive a ticket, could they please contact Nick Dibben.

Sometimes we planted ideas which did not bear fruit until a few years later - such as the scope for an improved through service between East Anglia, the North Midlands and the North West.

Over the past 20 years, East Anglia's rail network has enjoyed remarkable stability, with only the March - Spalding link lost to the passenger network. Certain freight lines have gone - notably Wissington, Lenwade, Fakenham and Yarmouth Quay - although we did all we could to try to save them. Some singling has taken place, but we were successful in campaigning against some of the wilder schemes, like 10 miles in the Diss area.

Of course, we have made some enemies - like the councillor who opposed nuclear waste trains running through his town but did not care where else they went; and the politician who wanted to close nearly every line in Norfolk and replace them by buses. Then there were the council officers who (unsuccessfully) opposed an application for a railhead on the grounds that it would mean lorries passing within 30 yards of houses! However, I am sure that we have made, on balance, far more friends than enemies.

We have a lot of unfinished business - like getting regular passenger trains to Dereham, Wisbech and St Ives; electrification to Felixstowe and Sudbury; seeing stations re-opened between Colchester and Norwich. In the longer term, an East - West rail link between the region and Bedford must remain on our agenda.

We must not assume that rail development in the future will come automatically. In the 1970s, certain people predicted a rail revival would be inevitable, thanks to environmental problems, and then settled back in their armchairs and waited for it to happen. Yet in the foreseeable future there will be vested interests who profit from road transport, and there are likely to be sceptics or "experts" who are not prepared to admit that we in RDS may be right - though, on past experience, such people sometimes at a later date come up with our ideas and claim them as their own.

We therefore have to keep fighting for our aim - a bigger role in rail.

Trevor Garrod, Branch Secretary. General Secretary RDS 1972 - 1986

NENTA SPECIAL TRAINS

Details of the popular special trains run by the North East Norfolk Travellers Association (NENTA) for the first half of the year are as follows:

- Saturday 4th April : From Norwich, Ipswich, Bury, Ely, Peterborough to the spectacular Settle and Carlisle line.
- Saturday 25th April : From North Walsham, Norwich, Ely, Cambridge to Bath (3 1/2 hour stay), then onto Gloucester (2 1/2 hour stay).
- Saturday 16th May : From North Walsham, Norwich, Ipswich, Bury, Ely and Peterborough to stations along North Wales coast to Holyhead.
- Friday - Sunday 5-7th June : From Colchester, Ipswich, Norwich, Ely and Peterborough to Thurso.

Trains will be formed of first class stock, and a buffet car will be provided. There are optional coach trips available on all tours. Trains also call at other stations to those listed above and there are rail/bus connections from other towns. For full details contact NENTA Taintours, Railtour House, 10 Buxton Road, North Walsham, Norfolk. Tel 0692 406152.

FUTURE EVENTS

- Sat. 21st March RDS Re-openings Conference Nottingham. Details from Colin Franklin, 109 Curles Crescent, Bedford MK41 7HY.
- Sat. 2nd May National AGM Birmingham
- Sat. 6th June RDS Branch Meeting Colchester
- Sat. 19th September RDS Branch Meeting Norwich
- Sat. 21st November RDS Branch Meeting Cambridge

The venues and speakers for the Branch meetings will be confirmed in the future.

EVERYBODY GOES BY CAR, DON'T THEY?

This title has appeared in many previous editions of Rail East, to point out the lack of rail services information on many leaflets and tourist guides that are produced in East Anglia. A typical example of such a leaflet, is that produced by Takare PLC who have a nursing home in Ipswich. The home is less than a mile from Ipswich Station, but is not mentioned in the literature. Nothing is shown on the directions map, which just stops short of the station. If there is anybody who is willing to write a short report, with examples of both good and bad examples of rail information, please could they contact Nick Dibben. Perhaps we should award a prize for the facility closest to a station that does not mention rail in it's literature?

Another source, or non source, of rail information is the desk or pocket diary. A study of 20 examples showed a wide range of rail information. Most contained a London Underground May, but BR information was more varied. About half had no information, included in this category were some so called "environmental diaries". The others had an InterCity map with some London telephone numbers, but only one diary had the Principal Routes May that also shows the main Regional Railways and Network South East routes. It should be possible for BR to get it's act together and send detailed information to all the diary manufacturers. If this is the situation now, what will happen if BR is split into many different parts?

GENERAL ELECTION

A number of members have offered to write to the candidates in their area on rail issues. It would be good if we could contact candidates in every seat to put our views on rail subjects. Offers of help to Peter Wakefield.

RAIL EAST 76

The next Rail East will be issued at the end of May. Items for the next edition and offers of help to produce RE should be sent to Nick Dibben.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

From the July 91 timetable British Rail have reduced the number of through trains between Cambridge and Ipswich on Monday to Saturday to 4 trains per day in each direction. There is also a connecting train service between Cambridge and Bury St. Edmunds to connect with a Peterborough to Ipswich service, but the connections are poor.

The railway management are attempting to run the Cambridge Ipswich line down as for many through journeys passengers will need to change trains at Bury. This is bound to prove unpopular with passengers and many people will switch to road transport at a time when the Government want more people to travel by rail. In order to operate the new timetable BR will in any case need to employ almost 2 sets of rolling stock.

Instead of attempting to discourage travel on this line BR should instead develop this service. A through Cambridge to Colchester via Ipswich train service operating daily at regular 2 hourly intervals would only require 2 sets of rolling stock.

Thus a through train service could be provided linking main centres of population but BR Norwich refuse to introduce such a train service.

Yours faithfully, E. H. Longland.
Buckhurst Hill, Essex