

## Passengers wooed

Between mid October and December 3rd, Anglia Railways held a "Free Travel Day" on each of its lines, and invited members of RDS and local users' groups to ride on the trains and hand out leaflets. On the Ipswich - Felixstowe and Ipswich - Cambridge lines, the respective local users' groups produced and distributed special leaflets. For the Norwich - Ipswich and Norwich - Yarmouth/Lowestoft routes, special RDS leaflets were printed, telling passengers about local services, the RDS and local users' groups. Passengers were also invited to fill in a form on the back of the leaflet listing three things which they considered good about the service and three things which they felt could be done to improve it. These replies are now being analysed and will be sent to Anglia management.

This promotion was extremely successful and attracted nearly five thousand people, many whom were not regular rail users. It was unfortunate that on the day chosen for the Felixstowe line, a replacement bus had to be put on for part of the time because of stock shortages. However Anglia intend to repeat the offer on this line in the new year. It was grat-

## Our Treasurer writes

I am pleased to report that the Branch has ended 1994 in a sound financial position and ready for any campaigns that need our support in the year ahead.

Thanks must go to all members who have supported the Branch so generously in the past year, especially to Chris Milnes for his sales efforts, Chris Burton for arranging the printing of Rail East at such reasonable cost, and to Clara Zilahi for her fund raising market stall.

A full report will be available to members at the AGM.

ifying to note that additional stock was provided for the Lowestoft - Norwich promotion and an extra train was run on the Ipswich - Norwich promotion.

Thank you to those RDS members who helped with leafletting: Trevor Garrod, Rod Lock, Dennis Perkins, Dave Ruffell and Wendy Marchant, as well as Margaret and John Ibbetson of the Mid Suffolk Travellers' Association, and John Brodribb for arranging printing.

The Branch has told Anglia management that we look forward to cooperating with them on similar promotions in 1995.

## Ticketing

The Rail Regulator has published his ideas for ticketing for consultation. All the schemes appear to give reduced guarantees about the availability of through tickets in comparison with the present situation. Further there seems to be no minimum standard for on-train ticketing and, therefore, it is possible that passengers boarding trains at unstaffed stations will only be able to buy those tickets that a train operating company cares to issue.

Anglia have indicated that they would continue to offer the same facilities as at present.

The Rail Regulator is expected to publish his decision later in the year after he has received comments.

## Thameslink 2000

Following the upbeat presentation of the project by Nick Richardson from Bedfordshire County Council at the Branch meeting in Cambridge, we have joined the Thameslink 2000 consortium, a forum comprising local government, industry and environmental groups.

Thameslink 2000 is designed to build on the highly successful Thameslink project completed in 1988, by increasing track capacity and linking the Kings Cross line into the system. New rail journey opportunities such as a direct service between Peterborough and Brighton would be possible thus helping to reduce traffic congestion on roads such as the A1 and M25. Costing £550m, the scheme is a fraction of the £4bn cost of improving the M25.

The scheme would have an interchange at Kings Cross with the Channel Tunnel rail link. It is essential for Thameslink 2000 to be completed first, both for construction reasons and to cope with the extra traffic generated by the Eurostar services. The consortium is pressing for completion by 2001.

## THE 1995 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 1995 AGM of the East Anglian Branch of the RDS will be held on Saturday February 25 at the Library, Bury St Edmunds starting at 1.30pm.

### AGENDA

1. Chairman's welcome
2. Apologies for absence
3. Guest Speaker - to be confirmed
4. Minutes and matters arising from the 1994 AGM
5. Chairman's report
6. Secretary's report
7. Treasurer's report
8. Election of Officers:
  - a) Chairman
  - b) Vice-Chairman
  - c) Secretary
  - d) Treasurer
  - e) Sales Officer
  - f) Minutes Secretary
  - g) Membership Secretary
  - h) Press Secretary
9. Election of Committee members
10. Motions
11. Discussion
12. Branch President's closing remarks

Nominations for the Branch Committee and any Notices of Motion, duly proposed and seconded, must be sent to the Secretary by the 15 February 1995.

The meeting should finish by 4.30pm.

## East-West rail link

The Standing Conference of East Anglian Local Authorities (SCEALA) is to investigate the idea of an East-West rail link between Ipswich, Cambridge and Oxford. Meetings have been held with officials from other counties. Different routes being considered include the St Ives line and a new more southerly direct route, possibly via Stansted Airport. Funding for the scheme could come from the European Union as part of the Trans European Network (TEN). SCEALA have also backed other TEN plans to upgrade the Felixstowe line and to reintroduce rail freight to Kings Lynn and Great Yarmouth docks. The Branch hails these positive moves and have given SCEALA our own thoughts on the East - West rail link.

## NENTA special trains

Details have been received of the special trains for the first part of 1995.

**Saturday April 15.** From Norwich, Wymondham, Attleborough, Thetford, Ely, Cambridge and Royston to Bath, Bristol, Taunton and the West Somerset Railway.

The following trains will start from Norwich and call at Diss, Ipswich, Stowmarket, Bury, Ely, March and Peterborough

**Saturday. April 29.** To Swansea and the scenic Central Wales line.

**Saturday May 20.** To Scarborough and York.

**Saturday. June 17.** To Bangor and Snowdonia.

For further details contact NENTA at Railtour House, 10 Buxton Road, North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 0ED. Tel: 01692 406152

### BRANCH OFFICERS

**Chairman: Peter Wakefield**

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**Sales: Chris Milnes**

25 Thetford Way, South Wootton, KINGS LYNN, PE30 3TG

**Press Officer: Ken Burton**

23 Abbeygate, THETFORD, Norfolk

## In brief...

**Breckland Users Launch** - The first meeting of the reformed Breckland Line User Group, which represents passengers on the Ely - Norwich line, was attended by 20 people including MEP Clive Needle. The MEP told the meeting that he was looking at ways to obtain EU funding for this and other lines in the region. Chairman John Saunders was able to announce that Regional Railways Central are looking at providing an extra morning train between Thetford and Norwich departing about 9am to fill a large gap in the present service.

**Anglia** have introduced **portable ramps** to enable people using wheel chairs access to all their trains.

Also, a "Midicom system" has been installed at Norwich and other main stations to help the hard of hearing.

The Branch welcomes the moves to help the disabled.

## Panic over

Just before Christmas, Radio Cambridgeshire alarmed RDS members with a report which stated that the Transport Secretary, Dr Brian Mawhinney, had said that Government funds were not available for the reopening of the St Ives line. A letter was quickly dispatched to the Minister asking for clarification, and suggesting that perhaps the reporter had misunderstood his remarks. The Minister responded within a week, confirming that the Government would consider funds for the project when a full application was received from the County Council.

## Branch rail franchise demands

The Branch has issued a report which sets out our requirements for potential rail franchise operators. The basic principles are:

- *Rail user groups and Local Authorities must be consulted when the Franchise Director produces his specifications.*
- *Service levels must not be cut.*
- *Operators should aim for an hourly service on all rural lines.*
- *No more cuts in station staffing.*
- *Maps and timetables must show services of other operators.*
- *Tickets should be valid by any operator on a particular route.*

The report was formally launched at the Norwich meeting of the RUCC in December by Branch Secretary Nick Dibben.

Wide media coverage was ensured by the publication that same day of an independent report to the Government Transport Committee warning of large cuts in services as a result of rail privatisation.

Copies of the report have been sent to MPs and the Franchise Director.

## Video

A new **charity video** has been made by Derek Haynes of the March to Cambridge line via St Ives. The video, available from shops along the route at £11, tells the story of the line and concludes with an interview with RDS Chairman Steve Wilkinson about the re-opening of the Cambridge to St Ives section. The proceeds will go to Doddington Hospital.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Saturday 4 March:** Local Transport Day. A national event to press for the local implementation of sustainable transport policies.

**Saturday 29 April:** RDS National AGM at the Riverside Centre, Exeter.

**17-25 June:** Green Transport Week. Various events planned around the country including the RDS Conference on Rail Re-openings at Bathgate near Edinburgh on the 17th.

Suggestions and offers of help for both Local Transport Day and Green Transport Week would be welcomed.