

RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY



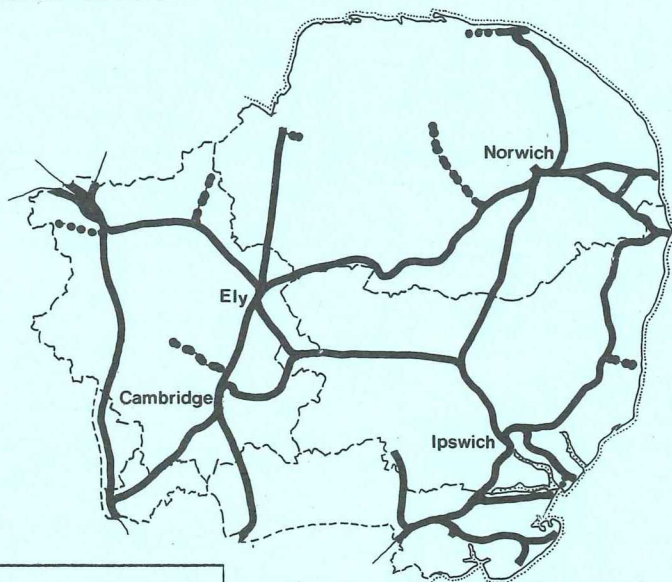
Rail East

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A Voice for Rail Users

No 64 Winter 1987/8



**Stott Report
St Ives Latest
Cross Country News
TUCC Report**

**Newsletter of the
EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH**

**RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT SOCIETY
EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH**

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

The Printing & Publications Sub-committee is appointed by the Branch Committee, and presently consists of Bryan Davey (Secretary, 88 St George's Road, Beccles, Suffolk, NR34 9YA), Peter Wakefield, Louis Hipperson, Trevor Garrod and John Brodribb, with the Chairman and Secretary *ex officio*.

Peter Lawrence, as Branch Membership Secretary, keeps up-to-date records of paid-up members, addresses, etc. The coding on the label on the envelope containing this issue of *Rail East* tells you when your subscription is due. For instance, "87.03" means that you were due to renew on 1 March 1987.

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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, plus north Essex (as far south as Kelvedon and Bishops Stortford), north Hertfordshire (as far south as Hitchin) and east Bedfordshire (Arlesey, Biggleswade and Sandy).

To join RDS, send £7.50 to the Membership Secretary, 21 Norfolk Road, Sutton Coldfield, W.Midlands, B75 6SQ. Other rates on application.

RAIL EAST

No 64
Winter 1987/8

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MAKING TRACKS FOR ST IVES

The East Anglian branch of RDS has long campaigned for the restoration of passenger trains between Cambridge and St Ives, and has recently produced a report under the title *Making Tracks for St Ives*. Produced to an exceptional standard, it is in A4 format and is amply illustrated with maps, diagrams and statistical tables to back its arguments.

The present situation in the St Ives - Cambridge corridor is seen as unsatisfactory for a number of reasons — a poor road network, congestion in Cambridge, and so on. Rapid population growth is occurring in the area, and the demands of Stansted airport are made clear. A great increase in commuter flows thither from the Cambridge area is envisaged. Positive benefits are also seen when people are able to travel easily into the area, especially to the Science Park near Milton and to St Ives itself.

The report sees the need to encourage park-and-ride traffic, since the M11/A604 roads run almost parallel to the St Ives - Cambridge - London line, and thus provide most competition. Electrification is seen as essential, since all services south of Cambridge will be electric by next year. Double track needs to be reinstated between Chesterton Junction and Kings Hedges crossing, and between Rampton Drift and Longstanton level crossings, to provide the necessary passing places. Stations are needed at St Ives, Swavesey, Longstanton, Oakington, Histon and Science Park, and at Coldhams Lane on the main line. Signalling is envisaged as coming under Cambridge panel box.

The document has been circulated to various influential and interested parties, and developments are awaited with interest. The *Cambridge Evening News* gave massive coverage to the proposals, with front-page banner headlines, a substantial report inside, and an editorial fully supporting the scheme.

As a postscript, Steve Wilkinson reports that this summer has seen much work on the line. Swavesey level crossing has been repaired, fences have been mended, and tamping machines have been at work on the track for several days. Trial runs and loading of 80-tonne wagons have also been taking place.

The reopening campaign received a major fillip early in October when Cambridgeshire County Council voted to spend £27,000 on a survey of disused railway lines and stations in the county. A report in the *Cambridge Evening News* for 9 October noted that it would see whether village stations on the St Ives line could be reopened, and also mentioned Soham, between Ely and Bury St Edmunds. In fact, the survey will go even further than St Ives, and will examine the connection onward to Huntingdon. Additionally, rebuilding of Cherry Hinton station is to be reexamined, and there are suggestions that the March - Wisbech line could also be scrutinised. The idea for the survey is backed by local Labour and Alliance councillors, but has been derided by the Conservatives as "... a crackpot idea, and flying in the face of commonsense". An editorial in the paper says that "Updating the present system and reopening old lines may well provide part of the solution to our overcrowded, underfunded and in many cases inadequate roads" and adds that new stations could cut out much of Cambridge's commuter traffic.

DOWNHAM MARKET DISGRACE

The *Downham Gazette* recently reported the closure of the delivery siding at the town's station on the grounds that it had become "outdated and uneconomic". At the same time, the local millers, Heygates, announced a continuing expansion of their business near the station. New flour and grain silos continue to be installed, and the plant now consumes 1200-1500 tons of home-grown grain a week. All of this travels by road, and the company has a fleet of seven lorries based at Downham. Clara Zilahi has had a letter in the local paper protesting at this increased use of heavy lorries from a site adjacent to the railway.

Downham Market was again in the news on 28 October, when the 1235 Liverpool Street - Kings Lynn train was derailed approaching the station, just after 1430. No one was hurt, and the *Eastern Daily Press* reported that passengers were favourably impressed with BR handling of the incident. An enquiry is in progress.

EXTRA TRAINS FOR EAST ANGLIA

Cambridge commuters benefited from a non-stop train from Liverpool Street at 1732 with the start of the new timetable in October. At the same time, travellers from Norwich had a new train to London leaving at 0440, and an increase in the number of return trains in the late evening.

LOWESTOFT STATION

There have been proposals to rebuild Lowestoft station since at least 1927. The present Victorian edifice, the most easterly station in the country, is showing its age, but is ideally sited for the town centre and the beach.

The RDS General Secretary, Trevor Garrod, has been to Waveney District Council's Planning Department to inspect the plans so far submitted by two developers. One of these, by P. Liding Scene, is not favoured by the British Rail Property Board — which is just as well, as it would apparently reduce the station to a single platform, at some distance from the present one.

The preferred scheme is from Bride Hall Group, and Mr Garrod has written to their agents, asking that RDS and the East Suffolk Travellers' Association be consulted, as representatives of rail users, as the plans unfold. At present there is only a general outline showing that all of the area to the east of the signal box would be redeveloped, with a new link road, car park, shops and station — but no indication of the size of the station.

Earlier we wrote to the District Council urging that any new station should have three platforms and the same range of facilities as at present (ticket, enquiry and parcels offices, bookstall, toilets and waiting room) and this must remain our policy. BR has given Weymouth (pop. 42,000) a new station with these facilities; Lowestoft (pop. 60,000) deserves nothing less.

FINNINGHAM STATION SURVEY RESULTS

Chris Milnes has completed his analysis of the recent survey of potential usage of a reopened station at Finningham (between Stowmarket and Diss). 170 local people completed the questionnaire, of whom 100 said they would use the station. The most popular destinations were Ipswich, Stowmarket, Norwich and Diss — in that order.

348 journeys per week would be made by respondents to the questionnaire, of which 145 would be for work, 134 for shopping, 47 for leisure and 22 for education. About 20% of these potential passengers might already be driving to Stowmarket station and continuing their journeys by rail from there. On the other hand, in addition to those local people who filled in the questionnaire, there would obviously be other users — like people travelling to Finningham, Bacton and Gislegham to visit friends and relatives, etc.

Chris calculates that, on the basis of the replies, 841,248 extra passenger miles per year would be generated and, at present fare levels, £60,238 extra revenue per annum.

NEW ANGLIA REGION FROM APRIL 1988

British Rail is to set up a new Region — the Anglia Region — to manage the rail services from Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street on which passenger traffic has been growing in recent years. The Secretary of State for Transport has given his consent to this change, as required under Section 45(6)(d) of the 1966 Transport Act.

The Anglia services are currently the responsibility of the York headquarters of the Eastern Region, nearly two hundred miles away. The new Region is being established to allow much more direct management attention to be given to improving service quality and to bringing investment schemes forward more rapidly. This will benefit not only the 225,000 passengers who use Liverpool Street and Fenchurch Street services daily, but also people living in the principal towns and coastal areas of East Anglia.

John Edmonds, formerly Director of the Provincial Sector, has been appointed General Manager-designate, and is responsible for making the new Anglia Region fully operational from April 1988, with no overall increase in BR administrative staff. It is understood that Theo Steel, present Assistant General Manager at Liverpool Street, will remain in that post in the new Region. Anglia will be a self-contained BR Region except for engineering design needs, which it will "buy in" from York, or some other BR Region. The Region will have an originating income of some £210m a year, will operate 25m train miles a year and will have a total staff of 10,500.

The Region will extend into East Anglia, bounded in the south by the Thames and in the west by Hertford East, Meldreth on the Royston - Cambridge line, and Whittlesea on the Peterborough - Ely line.

Those parts of our area now within Network SouthEast will remain thus. A recent leaflet issued by the Sector gives some interesting facts: it has 5960 EMU vehicles, only 386 DMU vehicles, 60 locomotives and 354 coaches. Its income in 1986/7 was £710m, of which £660m came from passengers: a further £196m arrived in the form of Government support. Network SouthEast has around 38% of the commuter market in London, the largest single share. London Regional Transport trains have 34%, their buses 8.5%, and coaches a mere 1%.

ARLESEY STATION TO REOPEN

Arlesey station, on the East Coast main line between Hitchin and Biggleswade, will reopen next year. This excellent news was announced early in October and is the culmination of a three-year campaign initiated by the East Anglian branch of RDS. Particular credit must go to Bedfordshire County Councillor John Tizard, who has chaired the local action group. All relevant local authorities except Mid-Bedfordshire District Council are chipping in with cash to rebuild the station at the northern end of Arlesey; it closed to passengers on 5 January 1959 and to goods on 28 November 1960. John Tizard writes: "I should like to take this opportunity of extending my personal thanks and appreciation to all RDS members who contributed to our excellent campaign, which in a very short period of time has brought about a major victory".

CAN BUS REPLACE TRAIN?

The Independent for 24 September carried a report which once again raises the spectre of bus substitution for local rail services. It says that the Department of Transport has asked BR to provide a full review of the possibilities of bus substitution, and will not decide on the British Rail Board's proposals to invest in new Sprinters until it is satisfied on the matter. British Rail argues that the saving from introducing bus services would be about £15m a year, which is very little when compared with the current £475m subsidy received by the Provincial Sector for its 4,800 miles of line. BR also point to the need for long and expensive closure procedures if lines be closed, and to their importance as feeders for InterCity routes. Additionally, revenue has risen because of rises in bus fares following deregulation.

RDS considers this matter to have been conclusively resolved many times in the past 20 years, and a resolution deploring the DoT move was passed at the recent Branch meeting in Norwich. Members are urged to write to their local MPs expressing their views on the matter.

FREIGHT DEVELOPMENTS

A recent report in the *Colchester Evening Gazette* highlighted the healthy state of BR's freight traffic in north Essex and south Suffolk. Much of the traffic is in containers via Felixstowe, and there are now around 20 trains per day. Rover Group, Ford and Saab are also good customers, with movements via Harwich often amounting to three trains a day. DAF lorries and army vehicles are also moved from Colchester; Hythe station is the destination for around 20 wagons of coal per night, for Charringtons and the Co-op. All this is in addition to the traditional traffics of newspapers, mail and parcels.

At the other end of the area, a ceremony took place at Ely station on 25 September, when Mr Jeremy Gotch, managing director of CAIB(UK) Ltd named locomotive 37 068 *Grainflow*. This marked the signing of a new five-year contract between Grainflow, a subsidiary of CAIB(UK) Ltd., and BR's Speedlink organisation for the continued bulk distribution of grain, mainly between East Anglia and distilleries in Scotland. It first started in 1980, and carries 250,000 tons annually.

BRANCH MEETING IN NORWICH

The East Anglian branch autumn meeting took place in Norwich on 26 September, when Tony Hudson, British Rail's Area Manager for Norfolk & Suffolk addressed a packed room at the Assembly House. It was chaired by Charles Taylor, who wished Chairman Steve Wilkinson well

during his present stay in hospital.

In the first part of the meeting, Peter Lawrence mentioned a variety of recent occurrences, notably the order for new EMU stock for the Cambridge line. Trevor Garrod mentioned a number of national matters, including proposals for a rail link with Heathrow, concern over the relatively straitened circumstances of the British Transport Police, proposals for more railguides, and the resurfacing yet again of the possibility of buses replacing trains on secondary services. The meeting unanimously passed a resolution condemning the latest Department of Transport directive to BR to examine this idea, adding that the case against had been amply demonstrated many times in the past 20 years.

Peter Wakefield spoke about the new document on the St Ives line, and about the very favourable reactions in the local press and from local councils. St Ives itself had grown from 5,000 population at closure to 20,000 now; the "villages" on the line mustered some 80,000.

Calls for help came from Charles Taylor, who commented on the low state of branch funds; from Peter Lawrence, who asked for volunteers to sell RDS items on special trains (please contact him for details), and Louis Hipperson, who was giving up the job of archivist. Volunteers to Peter Lawrence, please.

Tony Hudson then gave an interesting and open account of recent developments in the area's railways, which was followed by a very full question and answer session. His area reached south to Ipswich and Felixstowe and west to Bury and Ely. He had 1,100 staff and an annual turnover of some £20m. The past 6 months had seen the culmination of the £25m electrification scheme to Norwich, and the associated £35m remodelling and resignalling programme, all of which followed years of underinvestment. 19 manual boxes had gone; gated level crossings had been replaced either with half barriers or full barriers monitored by closed-circuit TV. Journey times were faster, and there were more trains later in the evening. Many stations had been facelifted, especially Norwich, where Norwich Union had sponsored the floodlighting. Stowmarket had had a grant from the Railway Heritage Trust; car parking had been improved generally. Stowmarket and Diss were showing a 30% increase in traffic. On the branches, Yarmouth via Acle had an hourly service, whilst the future of the Reedham route was now assured. Lowestoft also had an hourly service from Norwich, while there were extra trains via the East Suffolk. The radio signalling on that line was attracting interest from all over the world, and railwaymen from Japan, Russia and Canada had been to Saxmundham.

There had also been the campaign to promote the line as a scenic route, and the East Suffolk Development Group had been set up to promote it. BR viewed the opening of the new Felixstowe Docks line as a sign of confidence; also on the freight side, cement was already going into Sizewell by rail, and steel and other construction materials would start when required. There could be up to 2 trains a day.

From May 1988, 5 minutes would be cut from Norwich - London times, partly made possible by removing the Manningtree stop from some trains. There was an acute capacity problem between Colchester and Liverpool Street, and the line was now operating at its peak. Bi-directional working would be installed with the impending resignalling. There would be an hourly Norwich - Peterborough - Midlands service, and similarly from Ipswich and Cambridge, some trains going on to Preston, Manchester, Blackpool etc. Sprinters would be in use on all Provincial services within 3 years. The formation of a separate East Anglian Region reflected the growing importance of the area; it would now be controlled from London and not York.

Many points came out of the question time. Through trains to and from Yarmouth, Lowestoft etc. reduced the possibilities of effective stock utilisation. Local parcels business had grown by 60% in the past year, and 40% the previous year. Connections to and from local services were important, and BR were looking at improving them. InterCity trains would not be held for late-running local trains unless the latter were running into the platform, though there was more flexibility on cross-country routes. There was no prospect of the boundaries of Network SouthEast being further extended into Norfolk and Suffolk; ticket checks on trains now tended to be at the London end, where the incidence of fraud was greater. British Rail were keen to have a new station at Lowestoft, but Mr Hudson insisted forcefully that it would not be moving away from its present excellent site. Now that new Class 90 electric locomotives for heavy freight haulage were under construction at Crewe, it might make sense to electrify the Felixstowe line. At present, Class 86s could not cope with the weight of trains, and there were not enough of them to use in multiple. BR meet councils and other interested organisations on a regular basis, but some ingrained political attitudes were difficult to shift. Trevor Garrod proposed a vote of thanks,

which was warmly endorsed by all those present.

SNIPPETS

North Walsham redevelopment proposals: the *Eastern Daily Press* reported on 24 September on a proposal by British Rail to pull down the existing buildings at North Walsham and erect "basic facilities". Understandably, local councils are unhappy at these proposals, since the present station, whilst unstaffed, offers plenty of shelter and seating. BR have quoted a six-figure sum for refurbishing the present station against a few thousand pounds for the replacement. Meanwhile, the 0720 Sheringham to Norwich train was strengthened from 4 to 5 cars from 5 October, and a new 2255 from Norwich to North Walsham introduced.

The *Eastern Daily Press* on 22 October reported that the North Norfolk MP Ralph Powell had received written assurances from Sir Robert Reid, British Rail Chairman, that the future of the Norwich-Sheringham line is secure. He had sought these assurances following the controversial letter from Councillor Ian Coutts to *The Times* (see *Rail East* 63).

Meanwhile, plans are in hand for a new 15" gauge line from Hoveton & Wroxham to Aylsham, using the trackbed of the former Great Eastern branch line which latterly served Lenwade. Broadland district council has given approval, though local residents are less than happy. Opposition to a level crossing over the Aylsham bypass has led to proposals for the line to cross under by tunnel. In BR days, there was an AOCL at this point.

Two stations on the Walton line have benefited from the Shell "Better Britain" campaign. The Frinton & Walton Heritage Trust are running a project to improve and renovate Frinton station, the approach to the station, the station gardens and the crossing cottage and its half acre of garden, and have been awarded £300. The Kirby Cross Railway Modellers are renovating the stationmaster's cottage and gardens on Kirby Cross station, which is their headquarters. They have received a grant of £230. Rather more than this is likely to be needed at Walton, where the station was almost demolished on 12 August. The 1305 Thorpe to Walton train, formed by EMU 313 063, ran out of control through the buffers and into the station building. Nine people were injured in the accident; BR declined to publish the results of their enquiry at the end of September. Proposals to spend £100,000 on a facelift for the station are likely to be brought forward.

Recent activities by the British Rail Property Board have involved the disposal of numbers of buildings and sites. The former down side goods yard and cattle docks at Beccles were recently sold to Hutsons, a local meat company, and the station building was due for auction on 11 November. Land at Tivetshall, Worstead and Great Ryburgh was due for auction at the same time, with tenants being sought for buildings at Lingwood, Diss, Dereham, Cantley and North Walsham.

The future of the East Anglian Railway Museum at Chappel station looks more secure, with the *Colchester Evening Gazette* reporting early in September that only £7,000 was needed towards the site purchase price of £30,000. Also on the Sudbury branch, the level crossing at Mount Bures has been cleared by the Stott report as being suitable for installation of an open crossing.

An apology is owed to members for the incorrect date given in *Rail East* 63 for the Cambridge meeting; it should have been on 21 November, and not October. A correction slip, via Railwatch, should have reached you in time, but if not, we can only apologise for any inconvenience that may have been caused.

Contributions to *Rail East* are welcome, especially from users' groups, other interested people and, of course, members. Please write to the Editor, John Brodribb, who is also interested to hear from anyone who may be interested in taking advertising space. Please get in touch.

OPEN LEVEL CROSSINGS

Following the accident at an open level crossing at Lockington on Humberside, a committee of enquiry was set up, under Professor P.F.Stott. His general conclusions are that there are some sites where the likelihood of collision is higher than can be justified by savings in road traffic delays and railway operating costs, and others where the open crossings will continue to be acceptable. The yardstick chosen is that those crossings where there is the probability of more than one fatality per hundred years should be altered, usually to the automatic half-barrier type, but sometimes by reducing the speed of trains at the site. 74 out of 250 existing open crossings

are likely to fail this test, including several on the East Suffolk line. Equipment failure is not a factor contributing to accidents, though presentation of warning signs to the road user could be improved.

Reviewing safety, the report notes that Automatic Open Crossings (AOC) are of two types, locally monitored by train drivers (AOCL) and remotely monitored by a signal box, etc. (AOCR). Initial use of the AOCL was at very low train speeds, whilst they can now be authorised for up to 55mph. Road traffic levels have increased steadily in recent years, making accident figures difficult to compare. It is emphasised that the number of collisions that has occurred is very low, making statistical treatment unreliable; nevertheless, it seems that AOCLs and AOCRs have a higher accident rate than Automatic Half Barriers (AHBs) when overall use of the crossings is taken into account. Road users are 7 times more likely to be injured than rail users, though the risk to pedestrians is extremely small. The accident rate is directly related to train speeds, but not to road traffic flow. As the latter rises, accident rate does not increase in proportion.

Some interesting comparative annual costs are given. For a gated crossing with train speeds of 55mph they are £17,000; for such a crossing converted to AOCL and AHB they are respectively £10,100 and £18,900, the latter two including the capital cost of conversion spread over 10 years. Public user road costs, in terms of delay and casualties, are given as £2,400, £11,300 and £900 respectively. The installation costs of the AOCLs on the East Suffolk were about £45,000 each.

Prof. Stott observes that the risk of a road user being killed at a signalled road junction is about 5 times less than at an AOCL, and a hundred times less than at an AOCR. However, "road user" means "road vehicle driver", and pedestrians are ignored; it is admitted elsewhere that the Lockington accident distorts the statistics for AOCRs. Prof. Stott then goes on to note that the general public expectation of safety connected with railway operations is significantly higher than the expectation in relation to road safety, and considers it right to adopt a level consistent with the former. The yardstick of one fatality per hundred years is the current rate for AHBs, which seems "reasonable".

Under the general heading of Performance and Design come a number of detailed comments on the operating systems themselves. Equipment failure has never been the cause of an accident whereas "...for nearly every accident, failure by the driver to stop in response to the warning signal has been the cause recorded". Poor road layouts have been a contributory factor, as has the clutter of warning signs. There is evidence from France that use of conventional red/amber/green traffic signals has no effect on accident rates. Reliability of lamps and batteries may contribute to brightness and difficulties in seeing them, especially in certain conditions where the sun is low and behind the lights. The report concludes with a considerable list of recommendations, most of which have been noted already in this report.

On the East Suffolk line, crossings for conversion to AHB are at Bealings, Bramfield, Middleton and the following at Beccles: Cromwell Road, London Road, Grove Road and bypass. Ufford, Melton, Westhall and Beversham will either get barriers or a speed reduction, and Harbour Road (Oulton Broad) is to be re-examined. The East Suffolk Travellers' Association (ESTA) has made representations to a number of people, including local MPs, saying that the costs of a measure designed to prevent accidents caused entirely by road users should be funded entirely by the relevant highway authority, and that rail speeds should not be lowered to the disadvantage of BR and its passengers. A resolution to this effect was also passed at the recent Rail Users' Groups Conference.

It is now understood that barriers will be introduced at all sites where the alternative is to reduce train speeds, so that the competitive position of the railway is not eroded.

Footnote: the Department of Transport enquiry into the Lockington accident has found that the van driver ignored the flashing red lights at the crossing, and thus caused the tragic accident. BR are suing him for £119,741 to cover their various costs.

TUCC REPORT

This year's report from the Transport Users' Consultative Committee for Eastern England appeared early in autumn, and is a rather slimmer document than in previous years, mainly because there is no section for comment on particular lines. In his foreward, Chairman J.B.K. Flaxman notes that the area's railways seem to have performed much as before, though there have been considerable difficulties because British Rail now refuse to provide the necessary data to allow detailed monitoring of performance.

The various aspects of the railway service are then discussed. Under the heading of **Unpunctuality and Unreliability** the Tucc concludes that the overall standard of punctuality has fallen to below what the travelling public has a right to expect: the main line from Liverpool Street to Norwich via Ipswich comes in for particular criticism. Problems with HST reliability also caused problems last summer on the East Coast Main line. Cross country services also come in for criticism, their unreliability being largely due to the considerable age of the locomotives. Improvement is not envisaged until the timetable is recast, starting in May 1988, using new rolling stock. The efforts of British Rail staff during the very severe weather early in 1987 are singled out for great praise.

On **Timetables** the BR staff concerned with their drafting are again the subject of praise. The poor service between local stations on the ECML is again noted, though the increasing number of connections available at Peterborough is mentioned. Concern is also expressed at the possible increase in such problems when the line is electrified to Doncaster in 1989. InterCity do not wish to provide "local" services for places such as Newark and Grantham, and commuters do not wish to travel long distances in "inner suburban" stock. There were major improvements arising from the various electrification schemes, though the low speed (115 miles in 2 hours) of the "fast" trains between Norwich and London is criticised. The increasing number of cross-country services to and from the region is welcomed, as are the proposals by BR for more frequent and regular such services from 1988.

The Tucc is unhappy with the level of information given to passengers, especially when trouble occurs, or when diversions are necessary. They note that modern electronic displays can be used very well, but call for more staff training; also for much better use of on-train public address systems.

Rolling stock comes in for particular criticism, especially on the newly-electrified routes. The low standard of refurbishment of the Class 309 "Clacton" units is noted, together with the fact that they are now used on occasion on the Norwich and Harwich services, leaving Clacton trains to be operated by outer suburban stock. A similar problem exists on the ECML, where many services to Peterborough and intermediate stations are now in the hands of multiple unit stock. The report says that BR now acknowledges that there is a need for express, long-distance EMU stock. The Tucc welcomes the coming introduction of Sprinters on cross-country services, but criticises their poor seating layout and lack of a suitable "guard's van".

The **Approaches to Liverpool Street** were the subject of a request by the Tucc to the Secretary of State for Transport for a special investigation, following BR's refusal to provide an extra two tracks under the modernisation programme. The Tucc clearly feels that the Minister is in breach of the 1962 Transport Act in refusing to take any action, and is extremely sceptical of BR's claims that estimates of future traffic show no need for extra platforms or extra tracks.

On **Fares**, the Tucc comments on the changed "conditions of carriage" introduced last year, and urges a more flexible approach to the issuing of cheap tickets such as Savers. The introduction of the new PORTIS machines is welcomed. Stations merit a brief mention; some modernisation is well done, but elsewhere can result in unwarranted demolition of fine old buildings at very high cost. Demand for car parking continues to increase rapidly, and new or increased provision is noted at Norwich, Huntingdon and Manningtree, though Colchester remains a problem. Catering generally attracts very favourable comment, both at stations and on the trains.

Comments on the **Services** are grouped under very general headings. On commuter services, the Tucc considers that the chaos that often follows a breakdown in the booked service ought to be avoidable with the adoption of certain standard procedures. Together with the problems with rolling stock, the feeling is that commuters are not getting sufficient value or consideration for their money. Improvements to long distance services that have followed electrification are welcomed, though the problems of overcrowding are noted. The positive approach adopted by the Provincial Sector to rural and cross country services is welcomed. The lack of a passing loop at Beccles is again mentioned, the Tucc being convinced that it is needed. The Sudbury branch suffered from poor reliability and bus replacement.

In a final section on **Complaints**, some problems that are not mentioned elsewhere are aired. Occasional travellers are often confused about the validity of cheap tickets. Poor facilities for disabled travellers are noted, particularly when notice cannot be given of an intended journey. Overcrowding is causing alarm to the Tucc, and is leading to passengers travelling in unacceptable conditions.

WYMONDHAM AND DEREHAM NEWS

8 April 1978 saw the first special train on the Dereham line organised by the then Wymondham, Dereham and Fakenham Rail Action Committee; their successors WyDRAC are seeking ideas for the commemoration of this event. The prize will be a family ticket on their "Tenth Anniversary Special".

The branch has been quite busy lately, with the flow of grain from Elmham carrying through the summer and into next season. The traffic usually stops for about six weeks in mid-summer, but this year much of the grain which has been in store has been cleared for release by the Common Market and is giving the line a much-needed boost. R. & J. Seamans, who transport the grain, have now resumed their contract to move imported fertiliser from the continent to Elmham by rail, after a break of many years. A number of 80-tonne high density cargo wagons, both Norse- and VTG-owned have already been in use, and the railway will be used to transport this valuable commodity as and when the stores need restocking. At Dereham, UKF are still bringing in fertiliser from their depot at Ince & Elton, near Wigan, but this is usually only a weekly delivery with the rest going by road. A few years ago the wagons would arrive daily.

There is concern at Wymondham, where Ketton Cement bring cement from Ketton in 55-tonne private owner wagons. The company has recently been taken over by Castle Cement, who have a sizeable road fleet, and there is a strong feeling amongst Castle and British Rail staff that the rail operation may soon come to an end. This is a pity, as in 1983 BR persuaded Ketton to switch from the old vacuum-braked 20-ton CPR wagons to the new air-braked 55-tonne PCA version; had the switch not taken place BR would have ended the contract, as there are no longer any vacuum-braked freight services to Whittemoor yard to carry the wagons. Ketton spent the large sum involved in conversion, and the contract continued; in the 1970s, it saved Wymondham yard from closure.

Meanwhile the branch has been under repair. The resleeper between Dereham and Hoe (2 miles north) has begun, and is also taking place at Whinburgh, between Garveston and Yaxham, with a ballast train expected in the mid-autumn. Bridges are giving cause for concern with one report suggesting that the repair costs could be £75,000; one is already receiving attention at Worthing, one mile south of Elmham. Resurfacing has been done at Dereham station level crossing.

EAST NORFOLK TRAVELLERS' ASSOCIATION

ENTA held its Annual General Meeting in Yarmouth on 11 September, attended by about 30 people. The existing officers and committee members were re-elected and a slightly increased membership of 108 was reported.

The Chairman, James Apsey, in his report to the meeting, highlighted the signing of the historic agreement guaranteeing the future of the Reedham line as the most significant event in the Association's year. Also very encouraging was the completion of the electrification from Ipswich to Norwich and the Colchester resignalling. He considered it unfortunate that there had been so much negative press coverage of British Rail and urged: "If you want to criticise or make suggestions, please think first". The late evening service between Norwich and Yarmouth via Acle was another welcome improvement for which ENTA had long pressed.

The guest speaker was BR's Provincial Manager Charles Devereux who, echoing the Chairman's point, said that Eastern Counties Newspapers' "Improve Our Trains" campaign in 1986 had led to a drop in BR's receipts. He urged members to respond to unfair criticism if they wanted to keep a good service; and paid tribute to the "constructive approach of the local rail users' organisations and the many local BR staff of high calibre". Many of the staff had worked "fanatically hard" to keep services going in the bad weather last January when BR's competitors seized up.

Turning to the Yarmouth lines, he felt they had "got the timetable about right" but that there could be more promotion of the evening services. The hourly frequency between Norwich and Lowestoft (the best frequency for more than 15 years) had proved very successful. The through Yarmouth-Liverpool service would continue, but loadings on the Yarmouth-London through train were not sufficient to justify hauling a full-length train out to the town.

For the next 4-5 years, he envisages summer Saturday trains to Yarmouth from London, the Midlands and the North continuing to be loco-hauled, but some of the cross-country journeys on

summer Saturdays would be run by diesel multiple units as was done this year. Mr Devereux defended this arrangement by saying that it gave more seats. He considered it was better to do this than to have holidaymakers standing in a hauled train all the way from Birmingham.

Finally, he promised an hourly "Sprinter" service between Norwich and Peterborough next May, with trains continuing alternately to Birmingham or the North West, and improved links, via interchange at Ely, between Norwich and Cambridge.

RDS MATTERS

Electrification leaflet. Most of the 2000 leaflets produced by RDS to press for further electrification in our region have now been distributed, including copies to MPs, County Councillors and interested groups. Our Branch Secretary, Peter Lawrence, was interviewed on Anglia Television as a result. Thanks to all members who have helped in this project, and also to West Norfolk Borough Council for their practical help and advice. Some spare copies of the leaflet are still available from Trevor Garrod.

Diaries. Have you bought an RDS diary for 1988? This smart executive-style pocket diary costs £2.20 (incl. postage) from our national Sales Officer, G.Kent, 21 Fleetwind Drive, East Hunsbury, Northampton, NN4 0ST. It can also be obtained from the Branch Sales Officer, Peter Wakefield. With Christmas in the offing, how about buying some as presents?

Speakers. On 9 September, John Saunders, a National Executive member, gave a talk on the work of RDS to Wisbech Green Party; and the following week Peter Wakefield addressed the Colne Valley Railway Society. RDS maintains a national speakers' list which can be obtained from Reg Snow, our Administrative Officer, and is always pleased to provide speakers to meetings of other organisations.

Helpline. Is life getting you down? Do you feel like ending it all? If so, you may like to know that there are 127 members on the RDS Helpline: people with qualifications and experience in such diverse fields as the law, engineering, art, local government, photography, planning, economics, etc. They are willing to help and advise RDS Branches, affiliated groups and individual members. If you need Helpline, contact the General Secretary in the first instance.

JUGGERNAUTS: THE ALTERNATIVE

A national RDS leaflet of this title was published in 10,000 copies at the end of September. It is ideal for distribution in areas suffering from heavy lorries, and it puts forward a list of practical things that can be done to control the juggernauts and increase the amount of heavy long-distance freight travelling by train. The appearance of our leaflet was especially timely in view of a renewed campaign this autumn by the Freight Transport Association, calling for an increase in lorry weights to 40 tonnes. Our leaflet can be obtained from Roland White, Latymer, The Drive, Belmont, Surrey, SM2 4JT.

SPONSORED CYCLE RIDE RAISES REOPENINGS MONEY

£71.50 was raised by Richard Pill, an RDS East Midlands Branch member, on 8 August when he completed a 120-mile ride from Bedford to Lowestoft in just under ten hours. The cash raised will help the Society to produce a new book, *A to Z of rail reopenings*, which should appear later this winter.

NEWS OF MEMBERS

New members

We welcome the following who have recently joined us:-

Cambridge Preservation Society Wandlebury Ring, Gog Magog Hills, Babraham, Cambridge, CB2 4AE.

Mr & Mrs K.A. Hooton 7 Beeston Road, Sheringham, Norfolk, NR26 8EH.

Michael J. Wilkins 1 Chalice Close, Barrington, Cambridge, CB2 5RL.

Change of address

C.T.Lee to 10 Kalmia Green, Gorleston, Great Yarmouth, Norfolk, NR31 8LR.

CROSS COUNTRY IN 1988

Very considerable changes are scheduled for the cross country services to and from East Anglia from May 1988. All services will call at Ely, involving reversal for those to and from Norwich. As a sample of the schedules, here are the proposed eastbound departures:

0851 Birmingham - Cambridge	1709 Blackpool - Cambridge
0858 Birmingham - Norwich	1718 Birmingham - Norwich
0906 Derby - Harwich PQ	1808 Liverpool - Yarmouth
1008 Manchester - Norwich	1823 Birmingham - Cambridge
1108 Blackpool - Ipswich	1908 Blackpool - Harwich PQ
1116 Birmingham - Norwich	1922 Birmingham - Norwich
1156 Liverpool - Norwich	1954 Liverpool - Norwich
1224 Birmingham - Ipswich	2023 Birmingham - Cambridge
1309 Blackpool - Cambridge	2103 Blackpool - Cambridge
1408 Liverpool - Norwich	2116 Birmingham - Norwich
1423 Birmingham - Cambridge	2205 Liverpool - Ipswich
1507 Blackpool - Ipswich	2225 Birmingham - Cambridge
1516 Birmingham - Norwich	2327 Birmingham - Cambridge
1608 Liverpool - Norwich	
1622 Birmingham - Harwich PQ	

Life at Ely promises to be hectic, whilst Peterborough threatens to be chaotic far, far too often. Cambridge-Birmingham schedules will average 2 hours 50 minutes, whilst from Norwich the time will be about three and a half hours. Times to the North West will be reduced by up to 45 minutes. People in March are going to be a little miffed by certain services not stopping there, such as the Norwich trains, and journeys thence to Norwich will be more difficult: a change at Ely will be necessary. However, the overall number of trains actually stopping at March will be much the same as now.

There is a great deal of concern as to how Crown Point depot will cope. Comments from railwaymen suggest that management will have to be substantially tightened up, since the maintenance schedules for the new Class 156 Sprinters indicate a much "snappier" operating regime. One train will be specially extended to and from Lowestoft and may be specially named the *Trevor Garrod Express* — probably the 0800 to Liverpool.

The Cambridge to Kings Cross route will offer a through electric service at approximately 21 minutes past the hour, with extras during the peaks. Journey time will be 68 minutes, with the stopping pattern as now. Speed limits north of Royston will not be raised, because of shortage of finance. All trains north of Royston will be 4-car units, with uncoupling taking place at Royston when necessary. Only one train per hour will work through to Cambridge, the "slow" service from Kings Cross terminating at Royston.

The Peterborough to Kings Cross off-peak service will be as now, at about 35 minutes past each hour. The up peak-hour service will be as follows: 0545, 0615 (HST), 0630, 0645, 0700, 0715 (HST), 0720, 0745, 0832, 0905. In the evening peak from London, trains will leave at 1622, 1645, 1703, 1713, 1736, 1739, 1816, 1835 and 1903. There is a strong possibility of a 1753 to Huntingdon.

Chris Burton

RDS EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the branch is again scheduled to be held in the Conference Room at the Central Library in Bury St Edmunds. The date is 27 February 1988, starting at 1400. All RDS members are very welcome, but only East Anglian Branch members are entitled to vote. The library is in Sergeant's Walk, off St Andrews Street, and has excellent catering facilities.

Nominations for election to the branch committee are invited, as well as for branch officers. A list of posts and their present holders is inside the front cover. Please forward nominations to the Secretary, to reach him not less than two weeks before the date of the AGM.

— SUFFIELD ARMS —

— GUNTON —

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FOR TRAIN CUSTOMERS

Since 11 May 1987 it has been much cheaper and much more convenient to visit the SUFFIELD ARMS free house (opposite Gunton station), which is now under new management. Owing to the success of the late-night Fridays-only service, British Rail have now arranged for a late-night return service to North Walsham, Wroxham and Norwich EVERY WEEKDAY NIGHT Monday to Saturday inclusive, departing Gunton at 2225. You can now vary your evenings at this delightful pub, which was featured in the 1987 Good Beer Guide, and has received extensive coverage since 1985 on BBC TV, plus local and national radio and press, for its efforts in encouraging customers to use the local rail service to the pub in order to discourage drink/driving.

As well as regular live entertainment ('phone Southrepps 461 for details), the Family Room has now been re-opened; and there are new draught beers on offer, including Orangeboom, Skol and Castlemaine lagers, Greene King Abbot Ale, Guinness, Adnams Old and Bitter, Burton Bitter, John Bull Bitter, Ind Coope Dark Mild, and Tetley's Bitter, as well as Gaymer's Olde English Cider. Basket meals are also available each evening.

NEW CHEAP RAIL RETURN FARES ARE NOW AVAILABLE:-

Norwich-Gunton return £2.90 (£1.70 single)
Wroxham-Gunton return £2.10 (£1.20 single)
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Suitable weekday trains from Norwich are at 1904 (1945 Saturdays) and 2058, returning from Wroxham at 2113 (2142 Saturdays) and 2242 (also 2340 on Fridays only). From Sheringham the 1810 calls at all stations, returning from Wroxham at 2114. Additionally on Fridays only customers from North Walsham and Worstead can catch the 1935 from North Walsham and return from Wroxham on the new late Fridays-only train departing at 2311.

SPECIAL OFFER FOR RAIL EAST READERS

If you are celebrating a birthday or anniversary and mention that you booked after seeing this advert, you will receive a special surprise gift with your meal.

**For Bookings and reservations - phone Wroxham 3939
The Station, Wroxham, Norfolk NR12 8UC**

This advertisement was placed by the Public Transport Action Group.

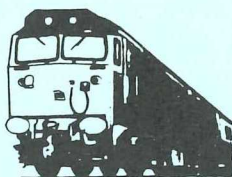
Railway Development Society (East Anglian Branch)

"By Rail" series: Yorkshire £2.75; Scotland £2.75; Lancashire & Cumbria £2.75;
North East £1.95; South West £2.50; Kent & East Sussex £2.20;
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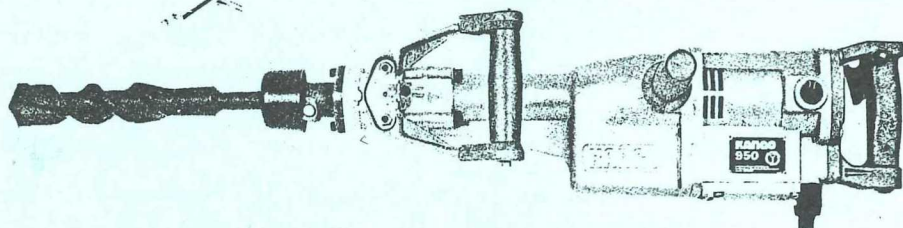
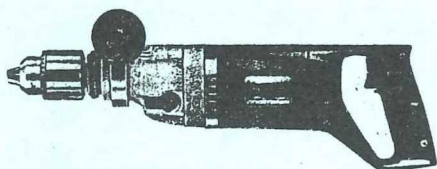
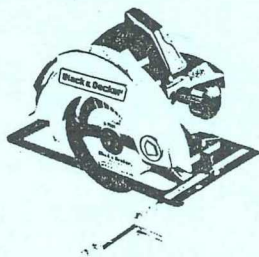
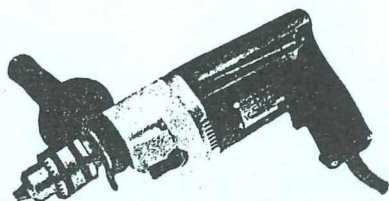
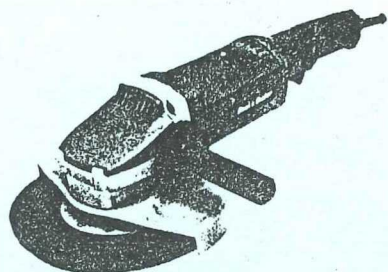
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